

WOMAN AS SHE SHOULD BE ;

O R,

MEMOIRS OF

M R S. M E N V I L L E.

A NOVEL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY MRS. PARSONS,

AUTHOR OF ERRORS OF EDUCATION, MISS MEREDITH,
AND INTRIGUES OF A MORNING.

V O L. I.

D U B L I N :

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1793.

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Anna L. Hamish

T O

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS

THE DUCHESS OF GLOUCESTER.

MADAM,

THE very high honour you have been pleased to confer upon me, by permitting the following work to be sheltered under your patronage, demands the warmest gratitude a sensible mind can feel.

I will not, in the common dedicatory language, enlarge on those virtues, and that condescending goodness, for which your Royal Highness is so eminently distinguished by all who have the honour of being known to you; for merit generally acknowledged, and never disputed, can receive no addition to its brightness from the feeble, tho' heart-felt, praises of an
humble

humble individual; nor can that exalted character, which rather seeks to shun than court popular applause, and finds, in the conscious delight of its own beneficence and generosity, more real gratification than the loudest plaudits could bestow, receive pleasure from adulation. Under this conviction, Madam, I suppress the feelings of my heart from bursting forth into grateful praise.

'Tis with the highest respect and diffidence I presume to solicit your Royal Highness to peruse the following sheets with indulgence. They were written under a painful confinement to my apartment, when torturing pain threw a cloud over the brightness of fancy, and precluded every attempt to wit or humour.—Conscious of its numberless imperfections, no one can think more humbly of the work than myself. Vanity had no share in the undertaking; and therefore, not arrogating any merit from the performance, I feel myself compelled to entreat a favourable judgment on the only claim I can adduce, that if the story is uninteresting, or the language defective, at least I have sought to inspire a
love

love of truth and sincerity, of an adherence to virtue from principle, which, though for a time it may be oppressed, never can be overcome; and to delineate a noble mind, that can submit to temporal evils, rather than forfeit its dignity and integrity of heart. If my powers have been too weak to do justice to the subject, I hope candour will give me some little credit for the design: and if, in a leisure hour, your Royal Highness should draw but a trifling amusement from the perusal, I shall be more than recompensed for the undertaking.

I have the honour to remain, with profound respect,

MADAM,

Your Royal Highness's

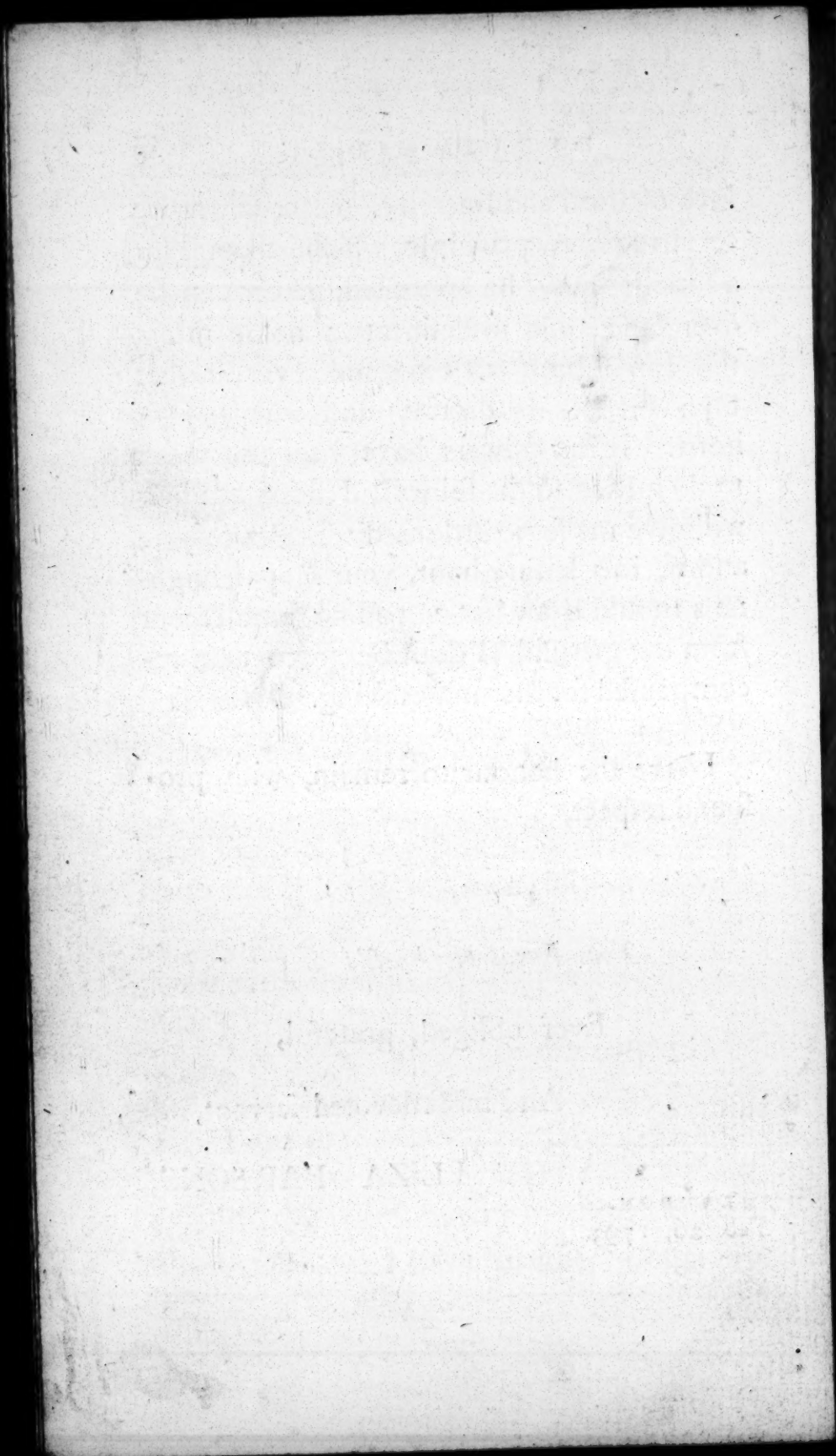
Ever obliged, grateful,

And most devoted servant,

ELIZA PARSONS,

LONDON.

Feb. 26, 1793.



W O M A N

A S S H E

S H O U L D B E.

L E T T E R I.

MRS. MENVILLE TO MRS. BERTIE.

I RECEIVED your friendly congratulations, my dear madam, with that secret delight which ever attends self-approbation, and the consciousness of deserving the esteem of our friends. Do not think me too vain in this exultation, when I have done away the surprise you express at my union with Mr. Menville, and exculpated myself from the charge (delicately and obliquely hinted indeed) of levity and change of sentiment, I hope to stand acquitted, in your opinion at least, whatever the censorious world may think of me. But in order to do this, I must go back and briefly retrace some particular circumstances in our family history, with
A which

which you are unacquainted, and which have gradually led to the event that now excites the wonder, and perhaps contempt of the inhabitants of this neighbourhood, and doubtless occasions many malignant whispers amongst the small circle of my acquaintance. That grandeur, and ambitious views made no part of my character, I hope you know me well enough to believe, and however present circumstances may appear to contradict that trait I wished to be distinguished by, when the motives which have influenced my conduct are laid before you, I dare promise myself your approbation. Without any apology therefore for the tedious detail I am about to enter upon, I shall call your attention back to the juvenile days of my father.

My grandfather, Sir Anthony Oswald, who had been knighted by the late King, on presenting an address from the county he had the honor to represent; when my father came of age, inherited a small paternal estate of about six hundred a year; his fortune had originally been of twice that value, but the good knight delighted in company, and old English hospitality, and having the misfortune to lose his wife at an early period of life, without any knowledge of œconomy, or the management of a family, his disbursements were entirely submitted to the care of a steward and housekeeper, who found their account in his ignorance, and by almost imperceptible degrees, his old oaks were felled, the lands not entailed, disposed of, and he paid considerable interest for money which the crafty steward pretended to procure, but in fact supplied himself. Under
such

such management, no wonder the estate was reduced to less than half its original value, and had not the sudden death of Sir Anthony, by the gout in his stomach, put a stop to their depredations, in all probability my father would have found himself encumbered with an estate; overwhelmed with debts, and such heavy mortgages, as were past redemption. On the death of his father, and dismissal of the steward and housekeeper, he settled his affairs in the best manner possible, and on closing all accounts, found he had about six hundred a year left, an income by no means adequate to his expectations, nor suitable to the expensive education he had received through the generosity of his mother's brother, who being possessed of a very lucrative place under government, lived in a most elegant style, had sent his nephew to one of the first seminaries in England, from thence to Oxford; and when his studies were completed, sent him abroad to make the tour of France and Italy, from whence he returned only four months previous to the death of his father, and just turned of two and twenty years of age. The disorder he found in his affairs, and the little knowledge he had for properly regulating them, compelled him to apply to Mr. Seymour, a gentleman of high eminence in his profession as a lawyer, and yet more distinguished for his worthy character. By the assistance of this gentleman, and the advice of his uncle, his affairs were soon settled, and he was not a little mortified to find his comparative small income so very short of his expectations; but having just reasons to believe his uncle possessed an ample

ple fortune, and that he must at one time or other enjoy it, he endeavoured to reconcile himself to his first disappointment, and confine his expences within the bounds of his income.

During the time of his residence in the country, and his frequent visits to Mr. Seymour, that gentleman's daughter left school, and came to reside with her family. Emily Seymour was about seventeen, with a most amiable person, and blest with a very good heart and an excellent understanding. My father viewed the young lady at first with perfect indifference, having seen and conversed with some of the finest women in the world abroad; the unaffected manners of this young lady, were not likely to captivate a man at his time of life; but frequent interviews, and the many virtues which discovered themselves in her behaviour and conversation, insensibly engaged his attention, and sometimes his admiration; in short, in a very few weeks, he could find pleasure in no society but in Mr. Seymour's family, and became almost an inmate of the house. His uncle had more than once wrote for him to come to town, and was surpris'd a young fellow of spirit should bury himself in the country; but in vain were his persuasions, or remonstrances; the attractions of Miss Seymour had now entirely subdued my father's heart, and being well skilled in observations on the sex, he was persuaded she beheld him with no unfavourable eye. He soon made a declaration of his passion, which was received with a modest reserve, an acknowledgment of the honor conferred on her, and a reference to her parents. Mr. Seymour had four younger

younger children, consequently the fortune he could give his daughter was very moderate; an offer, therefore, so advantageous as my father's, was not likely to be refused; it was indeed accepted with transport, and the young lady, being authorized by her father, gave her lover no reason to doubt of her preference in his favour. Previous to the completion of the marriage, my father thought it highly proper to acquaint his uncle of his intentions, and invite him down to Oswald Park. This intimation of his design, was not received as he could have wished: a very angry letter announced his absolute refusal of the invitation, and everlasting displeasure, if his nephew degraded himself by a match so unworthy of him; he added, "Your father, by his indolence and extravagance, has reduced the family estate and consequence, and you, by an imprudent marriage, are going to sink it entirely. Had you come to town, the most brilliant views attended you, and I should have enjoyed the delight of seeing you restored to that opulence your ancestors were distinguished for; but you are your own master; my inclinations are known to you, if yours accord with mine, as I once hoped they did, quit the park, and hasten to town; but if you are determined in your present pursuits, I bid you adieu for ever." This letter from his uncle, gave my father infinite concern, though it made no alteration in his sentiments; he felt the obligations, the grateful ties which bound him to so generous a benefactor, to whom he was indebted for all the advantages of education; but his heart was too firmly fixed in Miss Seymour's possession to be withdrawn, and his wishes being then
mode-

moderated, and subdued by love, he preferred a competence with her, to all the brilliant prospects his uncle talked of; he flattered himself also, that the old gentleman's displeasure would not be lasting, determined as he was to make every possible submission, and endeavour to obtain a reconciliation. The necessary preparations being soon made, my father was united to the amiable Miss Seymour, whose many virtues and goodness of heart, well justified my father's partiality, and promised fair to ensure his happiness. Soon after his marriage, he made application to be re-instated in his uncle's favour, but the old gentleman was immovable; he resisted every attempt, returned his letters unopened, and forbid my father's name ever to be mentioned in his presence. His nephew, though he painfully felt his disappointment, and deprecated his uncle's displeasure, found too much happiness and consolation in the society of his beloved wife, to permit the loss of his uncle's favour to interrupt his tranquillity, or sour his temper. Things went on in the same calm enjoyment of felicity for some years, during which period my mother brought my father three daughters, who all died in their infancy, to her great affliction; but five years after their marriage, I was born, the year following my brother Anthony, and within two years after my brother Harry, which was all the children this dear and respectable mother ever had. From the time of my elder brother's birth, a visible alteration took place in my father's disposition, which was still more observable on the birth of his second son; melancholy, peevishness, and a dislike to society, took place of that cheer-

cheerfulness, that openness of heart, which endeared him to his family, and conciliated the esteem of all his neighbours. My mother beheld with inexpressible grief, the gloom which pervaded his countenance, and the misanthropy which gained fast on his disposition, unconscious of any cause to occasion this strange dejection, she carefully examined all her past actions, dreading lest she had, however innocently, given him offence; but she had no self-reproach to encounter, uniformly good and affectionate, attentive to his smallest wishes, she could charge herself with no one omission of her duties. Happy woman! Oh may your example animate your beloved child to emulate your virtues, may she remember her bright pattern, and in the difficult path she has now to go through, conduct herself with that discretion which must ensure her happiness in this life, and the society of her blessed mother in the life to come! forgive this apostrophe, my dear Mrs. Bertie, you knew not the amiable woman whose death I am selfish enough ever to regret, though convinced she is eternally happy. But to return, one day when my father and mother were walking in the park, and his dejection was but too oppressive to her feelings, taking his hand, she summoned resolution to say, "My dearest Mr. Oswald, do not be offended, nor think me impertinently inquisitive, if I entreat to know the cause of that melancholy which has for some time taken place in your bosom, and which with sorrow and anxiety I see daily increase—tell me, I beseech you, have I been unhappy enough to offend you, or has any misfortune with which I am unacquainted befallen you?" "No, my dearest love (returned my father with a deep sigh),

ugh) No, you have never in word or deed given me a moment's displeasure. I am unhappy, I own, and I will no longer conceal the cause, but repose my griefs in your dear bosom, though alas! 'tis not in your power to afford me consolation: know then, ever since the birth of our two boys, I have been miserable; 'till then, I felt no regret for the loss of that fortune the prodigality of my ancestors deprived me of; I lamented the loss of my uncle's favour, but I never sighed after his wealth; but now, consider my situation, my eldest son must inherit the very small estate I possess, nor leave a possibility of providing for you or my other children, without burthening him, and reducing him to a situation unworthy of his name and birth; and even then, the slender provision that could be made for those children, must be very insufficient to support them decently, or entitle them to hope for any establishment in life. Added to these melancholy considerations, think by what means can I bestow that education on them which becomes their birth, for though not enobled, my family is ancient and honourable, and 'till the present representative, always lived in splendour. Such, my dear Emily, are the anxieties which prey on my mind, and deprive me of rest and peace."

My mother was thunderstruck, she felt the force of my father's reflections, and was incapable of removing the weight of them from his mind; moderate in her desires; no anxiety for riches; no family pride to support, she thought only of bringing up her children good and virtuous, and securing to them a decent independance. Her eyes were now opened, she beheld those dear objects of her care in a different point of

of view, and conceived she had done them an irreparable injury, by taking advantage of Mr. Oswald's sentiments in her favour, depriving him of his uncle's affection and fortune, and preventing his marrying more suitable to his birth and expectations. Overwhelmed with these reflections, she was unable to speak; my father, surprised at her silence, turned, and beheld her drowned in tears; my dearest Emily, said he, for heaven's sake do not weep, I shall never forgive myself for making you unhappy; ah, why can I not suffer without wounding her I love, and whose happiness is the first wish of my heart. "You are too good," replied my mother, "I am the fatal cause of all your distress, I see, I feel I am, but I will henceforth deny myself every superfluity; I will retrench my expences, and by the most rigid œconomy, endeavour to save at least what may enable you to educate your children; happy for them, if they had not been *mine* also." My father embraced her in an agony of grief, entreated her pardon, conjured her to forget what had past, assured her he would rise above his gloomy ideas, and endeavour to atone for the uneasy hours he had occasioned her. My mother appeared to be more composed, she tried to be cheerful, and redoubled her attention and affection to him; but the very next day she dismissed her own woman, and one of the nursery maids; in spite of my father's prayers and remonstrances, she took the care of my brothers and self entirely; she regulated the expences of the family in such a manner, as to give every usual comfort and indulgence to my father, nay even to increase them, whilst she deprived herself of every thing but what was
abso-

absolutely necessary. In vain were all my father's prayers to prevail on her to alter her plan, she always replied, "I only perform my duty, I find happiness in so doing, do not wish to make me hateful in my own eyes, I live only to see my children properly taken care of. The education of Emily, with your permission, I shall take on myself, except the instructions of a dancing-master, and when our dear boys are of an age to go to a publick school, I hope you will find the expence much less than you expect." Under the eye of this respectable mother was I brought up, ever indulgent and attentive. I found no trouble, no difficulty in obeying her commands, or profiting by her lessons; but my father observed with the most poignant anguish, that her health gradually declined; he wearied himself in endeavours to amuse her; tried to court the society he had neglected, and pressed her to enter more into company; but she always pleaded her engagements with her children, and assured him no society could delight her like his, nor any conversation afford her equal amusement to the prattling of her children. As he could not prevail on her to alter her plan, he disguised his own feelings, and by cheerfulness and good humour sought to disperse that anxiety which he saw too plainly injured her health. Thus things remained till I was about fourteen, my brothers being now of an age to go to a public school, my father one morning was consulting with my mother on the subject, after having agreed with him that it was time to place them abroad, she went to her cabinet, and returning, gave into his hands a paper folded up, saying, "You may remember, my dear Mr.

Oswald,

Oswald, I once told you that when our dear boys were arrived at an age to be sent to school, I hoped you would find their education less expensive than you expected—in that paper, I hope my opinion will appear justified.” My father hastily opened the paper alluded to, and to his infinite surprise, found bank notes to the amount of near eight hundred pounds—good heaven (he cried) how is this, and by what means came this sum into your possession? “ By the strict observance of prudence and œconomy,” replied she, with a smile; “ you may recollect, from that never-to-be-forgotten day, when I obtained your confidence, I made an alteration in the household, and the expences of the family; you continued to supply me with your usual generosity, I did not refuse what was given me, but constantly laid by all that was superfluous, and in the course of nine years, I have accumulated near twelve hundred pounds, one third of which, with your leave, I will reserve for Emily, but if it can be of any particular use to you, command it without reserve.” Astonishment, for a moment, deprived my father of the power of speaking, but recovering himself, he embraced her with the warmest affection; his expressions were suitable to her merits, and on that day I well remember, I beheld the most perfect picture of domestic happiness that ’tis possible for the human mind to conceive. My father insisted upon her retaining the money, and only occasionally to assist him whenever he should find the demands for the necessary expences of my brothers’ education inconvenient for him to discharge. They were sent to Winchester; I had a dancing master, and for a few months a music-master; my mother, who

who played the harpsichord remarkably well, had herself instructed me, and a few lessons from a capital master, enabled me to play tolerably, and as well as she thought necessary. This period was by far the happiest of my life; my days glided on with peace and serenity; needle-work, history, geography, French, with a little music and dancing, employed all my time, and occupied all my attention; nor was I left ignorant of those necessary duties which are required from a mistress of a family. This happiness was too perfect to admit of duration; my mother's weakness gradually increased, her cough and want of rest and appetite was too visible, though she made light of her complaints; my father dreadfully alarmed, sent to London for the best advice; the physician came, and confirmed all our fears. I will not wound your feelings, my dear madam, by a description of our distress; for six weeks we suffered inexpressible misery, watching the hourly decline of this beloved, this ever dear and respectable mother; and it was one day when sitting by her bed-side, that she recounted to me the particulars I have been relating to you; she added, that animated by the impulse of saving something for the advantage of her children, she had paid a more strict attention to the management of her family; and 'tis incredible, my dear girl, how much may be saved by a prudent œconomy; for as the largest fortune is insufficient for the demands of extravagance and dissipation, so a very moderate one will answer for all the necessary, and even elegant arrangements in a well regulated family. "You, my dear Emily," (added she with

with a sigh) “ are particularly circumstanced, born of a respectable family; your little portion will be very inadequate to the expectations of such as are on an equality with yourself, and men of small fortunes can ill afford to marry without one, for alas! a union of that sort, where love only is consulted, is productive of a thousand bitter regrets. A young woman therefore should be particularly cautious how she engages her hand or heart, for though riches are by no means absolutely necessary to procure happiness, yet a decent competence, such as may enable a married pair to promise a provision for their children, is really essential to their felicity. Be careful therefore, my dear child, how you engage your affections; let your father decide for you in that important point, and may you live to experience the same heart-felt pleasure I do at this moment, in the exultation of having given my children a virtuous example in their several duties, and in knowing that those dear children have a natural goodness of heart and rectitude of principles.”

You will pardon me, my dear madam, for this repetition of my excellent mother's words, which are indelibly imprinted on my mind. In about five days after this, her spirit fled to receive, in a blessed immortality, the reward of all her virtues! I must draw a veil over our sorrows; my father was long inconsolable, and reproached himself with having shortened her days, by an anxiety he had *planted in her bosom, and which had destroyed her constitution.*

My sole attention was now directed to my only remaining parent; we saw but little company; the Rev. Doctor Ellis and his family were our chief

chief intimates. That day which brought you on a visit to those respected friends, I shall ever consider as the first happy hour I had known from my mother's death; for though my father was ever kind and indulgent; though Mrs. Ellis and her daughter were good and amiable, yet my heart had not met with one congenial to its own until that evening. Forgive my vanity if I think our hearts flew to meet each other, and a reciprocity of inclination, in a few hours united us more strongly than years of what is generally called friendship. And now having brought down my little narrative to this interesting period, I will close this letter, and to-morrow morning resume my pen; mean time I know I need not desire you to judge favourably of me; one who has had the happiness of being esteemed by you, can never prove unworthy the distinction. Adieu, my dear Mrs. Bertie, my next shall quickly follow, and satisfy all your doubts.

Yours, sincerely,

EMILY MENVILLE.

L E T T E R II.

MRS. MENVILLE TO MRS. BERTIE.

I Now resume my pen, and proceed in my narrative. You well remember, I dare say, the day on which Captain Harley was presented to us by his friend Mr. Clayton, our neighbour; I shall say nothing of his person or manners; you thought the first agreeable, the latter uncommonly elegant; our hearts were ever in unison, consequently my opinion of both coincided with yours. The marked distinction he paid me then, and in his subsequent visits, was generally observed; my father appeared more pleased with him than any man he had ever conversed with, and took some pains to be informed of his family, connexion and fortune; the first he heard was genteel, the other respectable, but that being a younger brother, he had only a small estate, about three hundred a year, besides his captain's commission. His partiality in my favour was too obvious to be overlooked; you perceived it, Mrs. and Miss Ellis did the same, and I will honestly own I was not displeased with his attentions. You were his confidant, and when he seized an opportunity of conveying his sentiments to me, I answered him with candour and sincerity. "I had no particular preference to any gentleman; that I never would receive the addresses of any man but by my father's introduction, who should always decide for me" On this he made application to my father, through Mr.

Mr. Clayton and Doctor Ellis; he requested time to consider of it; Captain Harley's visits were permitted, though you know I carefully avoided any particular conversation with him. A few days after this my father called me into the library, and after repeating the application made to him, addressed me in these words, "You know, my dear Emily, your fortune cannot exceed fifteen hundred pounds at my death, even including the sum your angel mother saved for you, a poor provision for a young woman of family, and too trifling for any man of fortune to think of, therefore neither you nor myself have any right to expect rank or riches; Captain Harley is of a respectable family, master of himself, accountable to no one, he offers you a decent independence at least, and desires your fortune, whatever it may be, shall be secured to yourself. His character is unexceptionable, and I do not think you are entitled to expect a better offer; however, you my dear child shall decide; consult your own inclinations, and they shall govern my determination." I told my father, and told him truly, "that I esteemed Captain Harley, and felt obliged for the honour he did me in his declared preference, but as I had never suffered my inclinations to exceed that decorum every young woman ought to preserve, 'till authorized by her parents, I begged to resign the power of disposing both of my hand and heart to him entirely, convinced he was most capable of judging and estimating the worth of a man of merit, and to such, whenever I gave my hand, my heart must follow."

My father embraced, and praised my sentiments, and the very next day introduced Captain

tain Harley to me in form, with his declared approbation. I will own to you, my dear Mrs Bertie, that every succeeding interview increased my esteem. You, whose judgment I revered, you, was warm in his behalf, and in a short time I felt no repugnance to the idea of giving my hand to Captain Harley, particularly as he proposed settling in my father's neighbourhood. I desired however the ceremony might be postponed for two or three months, that our dispositions might be better known to each other. It was at this period you was, unhappily for me, called to town by the illness of your aunt, but you promised to return, if possible, in time to attend me to the altar. You may recollect about a week before you left us, we heard Stanmore Hall was sold to a Nabob, a gentleman of immense fortune; as my father saw very few people, and was by no means desirous of new acquaintances, the arrival of Mr. Menville was to us a matter of entire indifference; Doctor Ellis indeed invited him to accompany Mr. Clayton and himself on a morning visit to the hall, but he declined it, and we saw nothing of our new neighbour for near a fortnight after his arrival, 'till one day we had dined with Mrs. Ellis, and in the evening were amusing ourselves with hearing Miss Ellis on the piano forte, a servant suddenly announced Mr. Menville, and in a moment he was in the room; advancing to the doctor, "My good sir, (said he) "I hope my desire of being introduced to your agreeable family, has not occasioned an improper intrusion?" "By no means, answered the doctor, you do us much honour by this kind visit," then leading him to Mrs. Ellis, he afterwards politely

politely introduced him to the company. You will pardon my vanity if I tell you, that from the moment he was seated, his whole attention was rivetted on me; I felt confused at his particular observation, and was much rejoiced when my father arose to retire. Captain Harley, who was with us, mentioned Mr. Menville in very polite terms; my father was lavish in his praise, and said, "I never intended to extend my acquaintance, but there is something in this gentleman which attracts one's esteem; I shall call on him some morning or other."

The next morning, however, he was surprised to hear Mr. Menville was at the gate; he went hastily to receive him, and after spending some time in the library, brought him into my little drawing-room, where I usually sat at work, and introduced him to me as a gentleman who was desirous of being considered as a friendly neighbour. He staid above an hour, and engaged us to take a family dinner with him the following day, and meet the Ellis family. My father was in high spirits when he left us. I had not seen him so cheerful for many months. I cannot account for a sudden tremor which I felt, nor a dejection which arose on my spirits, in proportion as his seemed elevated; yet I did Mr. Menville justice; he was not a young man 'tis true, he looked near forty, but his person was handsome, his countenance intelligent, and his behaviour exceeding polite; he had resided in India near twenty-two years, and acquired a prodigious fortune, yet appeared neither proud nor consequential; in short, altogether he justified by his manners the prodigious partiality my father avowed

avowed in his favour. His visits now were very frequent, his particular attention to me very obvious; poor Harley grew unhappy, he thought my father treated him coldly; he prest me to shorten his time of probation, and consent to be his; though I felt for his uneasiness, I still thought there was an indecorum in such a hasty marriage, and therefore persisted in my former resolution. 'Tis necessary here for me to mention, that my grandfather Seymour died four years before my mother; that his eldest son was settled in London with an eminent barrister; his second placed in the navy, and the youngest sent to India; my mother's sister, a year younger than herself, married a young clergyman who resided at Durham, and died two years after. Thus we had little or no correspondence with any of our relations, except the lawyer, who being now in business for himself, managed my father's little affairs, which required the assistance of a professional man. My father's uncle, who continued always obdurate, had been dead some years, and left his fortune to a distant relation, of the name of Smithson. About this time my uncle, the barrister, having some business in a neighbouring town, came to pay us a visit; we had not seen him for six years, and he paid me a thousand compliments on my improvements; the first evening of his arrival, Captain Harley and Mr. Menville supped with us; he was excessively polite to the latter, but barely civil to the former, and I quickly observed by his conversation, had a great aversion to the military; the evening was not a pleasant one, I every moment dreaded a dispute between Harley and him, and saw that I was indebted solely

to his esteem for me, that he forebore taking exceptions at some of my uncle's contemptuous remarks on his profession, which were certainly very illiberal. The following morning my father and uncle walked out on a visit to the Hall; Captain Harley called on me, "I see, my dearest Miss Oswald," (said he) "I have not the happiness of your uncle's approbation, but that would occasion me little concern, did I not observe a coldness, almost bordering on incivility, in your father's behaviour, which wounds my very soul; ah, Emily, Why would you not let me profit by his first declared approbation?" I felt for his visible distress, but had nothing to accuse myself with, both delicacy and decorum justified my conduct; I made no scruple to assure him of my preferable esteem, and at length subdued by his anxiety, and earnest supplications, consented he should apply to my father, to name an early day for our union. He left me in a transport of joy and gratitude---poor Harley! forgive this sigh. My dear madam, the heart that cannot feel the wretchedness it has occasioned, however repugnant to its own wishes, must have very little sensibility, and to you I will not scruple to own I have made a great sacrifice to my first duty (obedience to a parent) of a very sincere attachment, founded on the merits of the object, and who little deserved the disappointment he has experienced.

But to return---the gentlemen staid dinner at the Hall, and brought Mr. Menville back with them to tea. His behaviour to me was so extremely particular before my father, that I was surpris'd and confus'd; after he had left us my
uncle

uncle observed, that he had never met with a man so sensible, so polite, so well informed as Mr. Menville: my opinion was asked, I answered ingenuously, "that he appeared to me a man of great merit;" and great fortune too! cried my father, and that is a prodigious recommendation to merit. I made no reply; I saw there was a little embarrassment in my uncle's manner, but after some hesitation he said, "Pray my dear Emily, how came you to think of encouraging Captain Harley's addresses? a meer soldier of fortune; his estate so trifling, that added to his commission, it is scarce sufficient to supply the extravagances young men of his profession always fall into; I am surprised my brother ever permitted such an improper intimacy, or that you, who know your poor mother fell a sacrifice to her feelings, for the little provision that could be made for her children, should think of incurring the same distress, and in spite of example, be ready to plunge into still greater inconveniences." The mention of my mother made my eyes overflow; when a little recovered, I assured him I never should have received the addresses of Captain Harley, but with my father's approbation. "It was an inconsiderate step," (he replied) "and mature reflection has convinced him he did you both a great injury. In short, my dear niece, your connexion with Harley must be broken off." "On what pretence, sir?" said I, much agitated. Don't be unhappy my dear," replied my father, tenderly, "but I have very powerful reasons for requesting you would drop all thoughts of Captain Harley." I burst into tears, my father arose,

and taking my hand, "Retire to your apartment, my dear girl, compose yourself, and to-morrow morning at nine meet me in the library; I hope you will then be sensible I have only your real happiness in view." I withdrew without a reply, and passed a sleepless night; I anticipated the intelligence I was to meet, and endeavoured to assume a composure in the morning, very foreign to the feelings of my heart. My father was already in the library, and I saw a mixture of concern and tenderness in his countenance; after bidding me sit down, he thus addressed me.

"I need not, my dear child, assure you of my affection and attention to your happiness, nor have I the smallest reason to doubt your love and duty to me; 'tis my pride and boast that you are the counterpart of your ever dear and amiable mother---hear me therefore with attention, and suffer your reason to be convinced, although your heart may be wounded by the conviction. You know the distress which I have for years experienced, on account of the small provision in my power to make for you and your brother Harry; you particularly engrossed my cares; a young woman, well born and educated, without a suitable fortune, is more peculiarly an object of compassion. I therefore ardently wished to see you married, though I thought it full early in life for you to expect any offers of that kind. When Captain Harley made application to me, I considered that my life was very uncertain; the retired situation we lived in, could not throw you in the way of being much noticed; and although he could not offer you splendour, it was a decent competence; I therefore

I therefore acceded to his wishes, though not with my entire approbation, yet I could form no reasonable objection. Your uncle has opened my eyes to see the unhappy consequences which might ensue from such a union. Officers are generally extravagant; their very situation, their rank, obliges them to be expensive; his fortune could ill support that rank, and the expences of a family, which should be looked forward to, where could there be a provision for children? and still a more dreadful consideration, if he should be called abroad to attend his duty, he might possibly fall; what then must become of his widow and family? What are the miseries endured by the survivors of many brave officers? the trifling pension allowed by government, is inadequate to the support of the widow, and the children must suffer want and wretchedness. I know, Emily, you may very naturally observe, such reflections should have been attended to before I had given my sanction to Captain Harley's addresses; I own my error, and lament that you should incur any distress of mind, by my too eager desire to see you settled; but to persist in an error, would be still more blamable; I therefore beseech you, my dear child, to give up your attachment to Captain Harley; I esteem, I respect him, he is a man of sense, I am now going to write to him, and I flatter myself I may answer for your obedience to my wishes."

When my father was silent, I strove to speak; tears opposed my utterance, but observing a kind of angry impatience in his countenance, I collected resolution enough to say, "You have
a right

a right to my obedience, sir, and shall have no cause to complain of me." I could say no more, but withdrew with a heavy heart, which felt more for poor Harley than myself. Mr. Menville came to dinner; he was particularly polite and attentive; my dejection was but too visible, though no notice was taken of it. In the evening I received the following letter.

TO MISS OSWALD.

I have this day received a mortal stroke, unexpected and undeserved; Mr. Oswald's letter, which I am given to understand you are no stranger to, has deprived me of every happiness I could expect in life. Oh! my beloved Emily! and must I resign all those fond hopes I have been permitted to indulge? Must I fly the society of her, for whom only I wish to live? What are my crimes?---the want of riches---and is riches then absolutely necessary to happiness? my fortune indeed is small, but it would have been my pride, my glory, by my care and œconomy, to have made that fortune supply my Emily with the little elegancies of life, though not the superfluities-- and now must all my delightful visions of happiness be blasted for ever! must I be told, that to marry Miss Oswald would involve her in wretchedness, would beggar her children, and embitter every hour of her life? Can this be true? My soul shudders at the idea. Cruel Mr. Oswald! Why, oh why did you

you not nip my presumptuous hopes in their bud; Why suffer me to nourish every fond idea, and then bid me tear them from my heart for ever? alas! Can that be done? to you my dearest Emily I apply, if to promote your happiness, I must resign my claim, behold me ready to acquiesce, though death should be the consequence; you must determine for me; I will not write to your cruel father, 'till I hear from you; but consider, reflect, before you pronounce my doom, for from your sentence I shall make no appeal. Dearest Miss Oswald, let that gentle bosom compassionate the agonies I feel. Suspence is worse than death.

FREDERICK HARLEY.

This letter cost me a flood of tears; at one moment I determined to resist my father's wishes, and preserve my attachment to the ill-treated Harley, but my dying mother's charge upbraided me for even hesitating to perform my duty. "Let your father determine for you in that important point," those were her words, and they shall most religiously be obeyed. I instantly took up my pen, and wrote a few hasty lines to Captain Harley, too expressive I believe of the distraction of my mind, though I signified my resolution to be governed by my father's wishes. I entreated him to quit the neighbourhood for the present, and assure himself of my unalterable esteem, though my duty to the commands of the author of my being, must for ever preclude a further correspondence between us. Having sent

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this letter, I strove to subdue my emotions, when I received a summons to supper, and no notice being taken of my swelled eyes, or loss of appetite, nor the subject at all reverted to, the time past off tolerably 'till the hour of retirement, when my reflections were painful enough. When I entered the breakfast parlour in the morning, my father rose and embraced me; "You are my dear beloved Emily, the darling of your uncle, the pride of my family; I have heard from Captain Harley, he is by this time on the road to London; I esteem him more than ever; I am not displeased at your tears (for I could not command my feelings) if you made no sacrifice, there would be no merit in your obedience." True, said my uncle, "My dear niece proves herself the dutiful affectionate daughter you have always represented her, and I am sure will find her own happiness in obliging her friends." I could make no reply, but bowed to him, and endeavoured to recover myself by preparing breakfast. A week passed on without any particular occurrence; Mr. Menville visited us every day, sent us presents of venison, fruit, and East-India sweetmeats, frequently. I took the liberty once to remonstrate to my father, on his acceptance of those presents, but received such an answer, as precluded any farther observation from me. I had struggled to recover my spirits, and disguised my feelings, and saw I gave pleasure by so doing.

About ten days after the departure of Captain Harley, my father one morning sent for me to the library; I obeyed the summons, and on entering, saw he was walking about in some agitation; "Sit down, Emily, I have something

thing particular to say to you, my dear, which requires your attention." I felt my heart flutter, and I trembled without knowing why; he seated himself opposite to me, and began thus. "I shall ever remember with gratitude and affection, my dear child, your compliance with my wishes; you know my motives, and I hope approved of them; I will now open to you my whole heart. You are well informed of the value of my estate, and that it has been impossible for me to augment it, or even save from it, consequently poor Harry and yourself, are unprovided for. Your uncle is in a situation that promises fair for a handsome establishment; he is already possessed of a decent property; he offers to take Harry as his son, to enter him into the temple, and amply provide for him, on one condition, which you have the power to ratify." "Me, sir?" exclaimed I, "Yes," replied my father, "your brother's future settlement in life, my happiness, and your uncle's favour to the family, are all in your hand; not to keep you in suspense, my dear, Mr. Menville is passionately fond of you; he has made the most splendid proposals to us, and your uncle is so warmly engaged in his interest, that on your acceptance of his hand, rests all his future favour to my children." My father stopt; I was drowned in tears; "let not your obedience to my wishes, Emily, be a partial one; 'tis not sufficient for your happiness or mine, that a union with Captain Harley is given up, to ensure my tranquillity, to make yourself independent and happy; to secure to your elder brother an unincumbered estate and future advantages, and to your favourite Harry

his uncle's favour and fortune ; all these delightful events depend upon you." " Oh ! sir, can I so soon teach my heart to admit another object ?" " And can my Emily, the darling pupil of a mother, so tender, so discreet, so sensible, whose whole life was spent, was devoted to the care of her family, can she hesitate to sacrifice a transient attachment to the happiness of her father, her brother, her uncle, when the offers are so splendid, the gentleman so unexceptionable ?" " No, sir," I cried out, " I do not hesitate, dispose of me as you please, I must ever find my own felicity in promoting yours."

My father rose and embraced me, " Now you are the dear amiable girl I ever thought you and be assured, my dear child, was not Mr. Menville's person and disposition as unexceptionable as his generous proposals, no considerations of self, should induce me to urge your acceptance of him ; but I know you will be happy." " It shall be my endeavour, sir, to deserve being so," was all the reply I made. I hastened to my chamber, and having indulged those emotions I tried to repress in my father's presence, for a few moments, I strove to recover myself, and reflect on the preceding conversation. I could make no reasonable objection to Mr. Menville ; in truth, himself and fortune were such as might gratify the wishes of any woman ; but I could not help reflecting, that, but for his offers, in all probability poor Harley would never have been discarded ; and was it generous, was it honourable, to make those offers, when my attachment to Harley was visible and generally known ? this struck me, but I would not suffer my mind to dwell on the

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the idea; I saw my fate was fixed, and that henceforth it was my business to see all Mr. Menville's actions in the best point of view. That very evening he was introduced to me in form; I behaved in such a manner as to obtain the praises of my father and uncle. Matters were hurried on very fast; eight hundred a year was settled on me for my separate use and expences, with a jointure of fifteen hundred pounds. A living in his gift, of four hundred a year, was made over to my brother Anthony in perpetuity; my uncle took upon himself the care of Harry's fortune, and my father had the delight of seeing all his family provided for; never was man so happy; I was loaded with presents, valuable jewels and fine clothes; I endeavoured to be grateful, and in the visible happiness of those around me, to find my own.

In less than three weeks after the preparations began, I was united to Mr. Menville, and must with truth declare, 'tis impossible any man can be more attached to a woman, or study more to make himself beloved; I am neither insensible or unjust, I feel grateful for his kindness, and shall make it my unremitting endeavours to deserve a continuance of it. And now, my dear madam, you have my whole story before you, judge me with candour, and if possible, let me stand as well justified in your opinion as I am in my own. I have heard nothing of Captain Harley since his departure, he has my sincerest wishes for his happiness. Mr. Menville talks of visiting town early in the winter, and made an offer of taking me to Bath the end of this month, but I prefer the country at this charming season of the year, and if my dear Mrs. Bertie would
favour

favour me with a visit, every wish would be gratified. My uncle leaves us next week, and takes my beloved Harry with him. Anthony soon goes to Oxford. Mrs. and Miss Ellis are my constant guests, and I derive both pleasure and knowledge from such amiable companions. Adieu, my dear friend, do not let me languish for a letter, which must add to my pleasures.

Ever sincerely yours,

EMILY MENVILLE.

LETTER III.

MRS. BERTIE TO MRS. MENVILLE.

YES, my dear friend, yes, you are acquitted: acquitted did I say? I admire, I esteem you a thousand times more than ever; your whole conduct challenges the esteem of the world, and may your father, your brothers, your uncle and friends, rejoice in a continuation of your happiness. Since I wrote you last, my aunt has been exceeding ill; she is getting better, and her physicians have ordered her to Bath; I have promised to accompany her, let me entreat you to accept Mr. Menville's offer and meet me there; what a delightful excursion shall I find it then; think of it my beloved friend, and indulge me.

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I am charmed with your little family history, and adore your mother; no wonder you excel all of your sex I have ever yet met with; with such a preceptress, and such an example, how could you be otherwise. I have often thought there was an inequality in your father's disposition, and from Mrs. Ellis heard, that he had formerly appeared to be a very melancholy man; his conduct and apparent dislike of company, is now accounted for, and surely proves his sensibility and attention to his family. I have frequently thought there cannot be a greater misfortune than for a person to be well born, and deprived of a fortune to support their birth; such people have few opportunities of settling themselves to advantage, young women particularly, and therefore 'tis doubtless the duty of every parent to provide for them if possible in their life time. An acquaintance of mine, who unhappily is descended from a noble family, married a gentleman in the medical line, and who was eminent in his profession, consequently they lived in a very genteel style; she had birth, beauty, and connexions, but no fortune; however, the latter was not considered necessary by the doctor, good connexions being in his opinion of equal value; they certainly increased his business, and enabled his lady to dress, frequent public places, and have as splendid routs as her titled relations; she had four daughters, they were brought up in the most expensive style; a flimsy French governess to superintend their education, with orders to indulge the dear creatures, for, "she could not bear to hear them cry, or see them unhappy." For twelve years they lived in splendour and apparent happiness, at that period
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the good doctor unfortunately caught a putrid fever in attending a patient, and died in a few days. Her friends assisted her in settling her business and investigating her affairs; my uncle had been one of his most intimate friends, and always believed him to be a man of large property; judge what must have been the surprise and grief of his lady, when on closing all accounts, there remained less than two thousand pounds for the support of herself and four daughters, exclusive of the furniture and plate, which might be worth about fifteen hundred pounds more; 'tis impossible to form any idea of her distress; she had borne the loss of her husband with decent resignation, but she could not support a shock like this; her violence, her invectives and complaints, were beyond all bounds; my uncle and aunt endeavoured to sooth her grief, and strengthen her mind; they advised her to consult her noble relations as to her future settlement; they *were* consulted, "were extremely sorry for poor Mrs. S——, she ought to have known her husband's circumstances better, and not have vied with people of ten times her fortune; it was impossible *they* could be of any service, they had all families of their own; the best *advice* they had to offer was, for her to turn every thing into money, and retire with her children to some distant cheap part of the kingdom, and bring up her daughters in a frugal way." This was the unanimous opinion and, advice of her affectionate relations—fired with indignation at this contemptuous treatment, she determined to live no longer in the same kingdom with those she could no more associate with,
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and being convinced she had a new plan to pursue in the management of her children, the eldest of which was not quite eleven years of age; with the assistance of my uncle all her effects were turned into money, which was placed out to the best advantage, and in a few weeks she quitted England, and was settled at Abbeville in France; her children she sent as day boarders to a convent, and by an entire change of sentiments, as meritorious as unexpected, an exact economy in her domestic expences, and devoting her whole time to the care of her children, in about six years she recovered her peace of mind, found satisfaction in performing her duties, added to her little income by her frugality, and had the supreme delight of seeing her children accomplished and happy. At this period a relation and her good friend died; it was necessary she should return to England to settle her affairs, and her strong attachment to her children would not permit her to leave them behind. My aunt insisted upon their accepting apartments in her house, and there, for the first time, I saw this agreeable family. In a very few months after their arrival, an uncle of the doctor's died, and left his fortune, about five thousand pounds, between the four girls. This pretty addition enabled her to take a small house at Brompton and live respectably. My aunt could scarcely believe it possible a woman so proud, violent and dissipated, should change to a sensible, amiable companion, an instructive, tender, mother; yet such was, such is, Mrs. S—in every sense of the word: but, alas! she was doomed to feel the ill effects of her former conduct, and experience the bitterest stroke an affectionate parent could sustain. I
obser-

observed to you, Miss S—was about eleven years of age when her father died; and that, previous to that event, a French governess had superintended her education. This woman (whose sole recommendation was the language she pretended to be mistress of) was low-minded, vulgar, cringing and artful; she found that to indulge her young pupils was the road to Mrs. S's esteem, and therefore instruction was the last thing thought of. Miss S—was very handsome; her personal charms was a continual theme; her mother's noble birth was another, and Miss was taught to believe she must one day be a duchess at least: she had naturally much vivacity of disposition and a quick understanding. The death of her father, the dismissal of her governess, and the entire change in every department of the household, afflicted her young mind more than could have been expected. During her residence in France she had, indeed, acquired many accomplishments, and an apparent contentment with her situation: but, alas! the seeds of vanity, pride, and dissipation, had been early and strongly implanted in her heart; and though they lay dormant a few years, yet on her arrival in England, being greatly admired, with the small addition to her expectations, and the various scenes of gaiety and dissipation she both saw and heard of, recalled all Madame Rochelle's pleasing visions to her imagination. She knew she was lovely, of respectable birth, and saw no reason why she should not raise her views to the first situation in the kingdom. Mrs. S—was no sooner settled at Brompton, than a few of her relations, influenced, perhaps, by curiosity
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at first, paid her a visit; and finding her establishment genteel, though not splendid, Lord and Lady R—condescended to honor her daughter with their notice. Mrs. S—deliberated long within herself, whether time and the interest of her family should subdue the resentment she felt for their shameful neglect of her so many years: she had also another apprehension lest her daughter should be captivated by the gaieties of the world; but Lady R—was so desirous of Miss S'—s company, and her Ladyship's character in general so respectable, that, in an evil hour, she complied with their joint wishes; and the young lady was permitted to spend a month with her noble relations. She was now just turned of seventeen, a dangerous and susceptible age! With all the pride of conscious beauty and an eager desire to shine in the highest circles, she soon attracted observation and admiration; amongst others, a noble Duke, well known in the annals of gallantry, was particularly charmed with her, nor did she appear insensible to his attentions. Lady R—, no stranger to the Duke's character, was displeased with his particularity, and cautioned her young relation to be on the reserve in her behaviour; she also addressed the Duke, and told him the young lady's situation would not admit of being trifled with, and that the admiration and partiality he discovered towards her, to another person might be of little consequence, but this young creature was new to the world, uninformed, and of small fortune; therefore to inspire her with romantic hopes of a splendid establishment would be cruel and injurious to her and her family." The Duke received this remonstrance in silence, and what passed

passed between him and the unfortunate girl will perhaps ever be a secret. But two days previous to her return home, one morning when Lady R—was going some visits, she declined accompanying her under the pretence of a violent head-ach; but no sooner had the carriage drove from the door than she came down into the hall in a walking dress, and 'tis supposed watched the porter down stairs; but meeting a female servant in the hall, she said, "bid Thomas follow me directly to Mrs. Moleworth's:" and walked off very quick. The servant came to my aunt's and enquired for Miss S—, and being informed she was not there, said he must wait, as the young lady would be there in a minute or two no doubt. 'Tis conjectured she must have gone round the corner and got quickly into Bond-street, where no doubt her lover was waiting. The servant waited at my aunt's 'till past five, and then went home under much surprise and vexation; Lady R---had been returned some time, and being informed Miss S---was gone to Mrs. Moleworth's and Thomas with her, was perfectly satisfied; judge her astonishment when he returned without her and heard he had never seen her. The whole appeared to her a premeditated plan of deception. Messengers were dispatched every way without gaining the smallest intelligence: one of the house-maids was missing, and all the young lady's wardrobe gone; which business must have been transacted late in the evening or early that morning. Lord and Lady R---were almost distracted; they deferred communicating their apprehensions to Mrs. S--- in the slender hope of more pleasing intelligence; but the following day

day brought them a penny-post letter from the unfortunate girl to inform them " she had taken a trip to the continent to spend a few months in Italy with the Duke of——, whose honor she relied on, and with whom she hoped to enjoy pleasures of a superior kind to those she could expect in her mother's *sober* retirement at Brompton." It would be impossible for me to describe the distress of Lady R---, much less paint the distraction of her mother when the affair was opened to her; how bitterly did she regret the early part of her education, and curse that pride of birth which had prevented her from placing her daughter in some situation where vanity might have been nipped in the bud, and a laudable industry have occupied her thoughts and prevented all possibility of being thrown into such temptations! My aunt and Lady R---sought to afford her every consolation possible, but for some months she was the most miserable of women. Her unhappy daughter continues to reside abroad; the Duke has long since returned to England, and she remained with a foreign Prince. His Grace married soon after his return a very amiable woman, and consideration for her peace has made the family silent as to the injuries of the unhappy Miss S—My friend, her mother, has retired into Devonshire, where she educates her young family on a very different plan, and accommodating them to expect only a mediocrity of fortune and situation; her health is gradually declining, and she never ceases to regret the folly of bringing up young people above the state of their fortunes, and lamenting the fate of those girls of high birth who are without the means of supporting their rank,
and

and who consider every vice pardonable under the sanction of splendor and fashion, and no crime *unpardonable* but poverty.

I know not whether you will think my little narrative interesting or not, but I had just received a letter from my dear Mrs. S— and her injuries and misfortunes struck my mind most forcibly. I shall be truly happy if your next letter informs me I may expect to meet you at Bath, my aunt ardently wishes to see you; in truth was I not a very generous female I should be less desirous of your company, for wherever *you* appear all others can be but secondary objects, and as I have still a small share of vanity and sometimes proudly look around me with abundant self-gratification from the frivolity of the present race of fine ladies, it requires much friendship and self-denying humility to submit voluntarily to the superiority of another. Give me credit therefore for such an effort of generosity, and reward it by making me supremely happy in your company.

Adieu, my dear friend,

Ever, affectionately, yours,

CHARLOTTE BERTIE.

LETTER

L E T T E R VI.

CAPT. HARLEY TO THE REV. DOCTOR ELLIS.

Madrid, August, 25, 17—.

DEAR SIR,

TH E distraction of my mind on that fatal day I flew from Sudbury, and all my hopes of happiness in this life can alone apologize for the abrupt leave I took of your amiable family; do me the justice to believe, my dear sir, that I entertain the warmest sense of your hospitality and kindness, and that however dead I may be to pleasure, the hours I have spent with you will be numbered amongst my happiest days, and I trust I shall ever treasure in my memory those precepts of virtue and goodness which are enforced and animated by your example.

My worthy friend Clayton accompanied me to London, I may say guided me there, for, indeed, I was scarce sensible of the road we took; to his unwearied endeavours to sooth and subdue my feelings I owe my recovery to reason: his kindness shall not be thrown away, for I will exert myself to deserve *his* friendship and *your* approbation. Yes, my reverend friend, though I must ever remember "such things were, and were most dear to me," I will not indulge sorrow or despair; if I cannot be happy in myself I will enjoy the felicity of my friends,
and

and seek improvement to my mind from the stroke that wounds my heart. We stayed in London until the intelligence reached me my foreboding fears had anticipated; Miss Oswald was united to Mr. Menville! selfish, cruel, man! he knew my pretensions; he knew the delightful hopes I had been permitted to entertain, and never gave me the smallest intimation of his designs to work my destruction. Yet though unconscious of his treachery, I never could esteem him: my heart revolted at his offers of friendship, and I even upbraided its coldness and injustice to a man of merit. I am his victim, grant Heaven I may be the only one! We must never meet, for, though as the husband of the woman I adored, his person must be sacred, yet I would not trust the impulse of the moment should I see him; to avoid it, therefore, I determined to leave England, and having already visited France, Germany, and Italy, I fixed my tour for Spain, where new places and objects might excite my attention and give a diversity to my thoughts. My generous friend offered to accompany me, and like another Pylades attend his wretched friend; I had not self-denial enough to refuse the blessing, though I felt the full extent of the obligation, and he wrote you previous to our leaving England; I had not sufficient fortitude at that time to address you but by proxy. An account of our journey 'till we arrived at Madrid could afford you no amusement, as I was but ill qualified to make entertaining or judicious observations; like an Automaton I was at the command of others and incapable of directing myself. We have been here about ten days, and

as Mr. Clayton took care to procure letters of recommendation, we have received many more obliging offers of civility and kindness than I expected from this reserved nation; but 'tis certain their natural formality gives ground daily, and they have acquired a small portion of freedom in their manners from their polite neighbours the French. I try to recover the serenity of my mind, I endeavour to be grateful for the attentions we are honored with, but one dear image triumphs and pursues me every where; I find no pleasure in society, yet dare not indulge myself alone: I have recovered my reason sufficiently to *know* my duty, but the wayward heart is too refractory to be subdued to the practice of it—what time, the kindness of my friend, and your wise and gentle admonitions may do, I know not, but I promise you to add my best endeavours for that purpose, and that I will never, in thought, word, or deed, deserve to forfeit your invaluable esteem. Present my best and grateful respects to your amiable family, and believe me,

Dear sir,

your obliged,

and grateful, humble servant,

FREDERIC HARLEY.

LETTER

LETTER V.

REV. DOCTOR ELLIS TO CAPTAIN HARLEY.

DISAPPOINTMENT in our best hopes and wishes, my dear young friend, is too often the condition of this life, and we are taught to believe, by frequent and unerring proofs, that such disappointments are calculated to improve our virtues and ultimately turn out for our advantage; for sorrow humanizes the mind and expands the heart to feel for the woes of others: it teaches resignation, compassion, and benevolence; and what are the good effects such virtues may not be expected to produce? Felicity to our fellow-creatures and self-approbation to ourselves must be the result in a well-disposed mind, and, trust me, *that* mind will derive to itself infinitely more happiness in promoting the good of others, than the highest gratification of his own selfish wishes could ever afford him. Your peace, my dear Harley, is among our first wishes, and I doubt not will shortly be restored; but do not fly into the common modes of dissipating grief and disappointment; let it be the triumph of reason, not the work of folly; let your passions be subdued by religion and reflection, and not drowned by riotous company and diversions; in attending to the dictates of the former you will assuredly surmount your troubles;

bles, in following the other you only stifle for a time, a flame which will receive fresh fuel, and in the end consume every good and virtuous thought, and prove the source of *never-ending* sorrow and remorse. Do not be offended at the freedom you invited, but consider the effort I make in writing this letter as a proof of my affection and esteem; the disorder in my eyes daily gains ground and renders writing, which was ever my delight, the most painful employment I can take up; you must therefore be content to change your correspondent, (for we will not give up the pleasure of hearing from one whose happiness we are so warmly interested in), and accept a young female one in lieu of an old male one; in short, my daughter Eliza, with our joint approbation, is henceforth to be my amanuensis, and remember young man the confidence I place in your principles; let your letters to her be the test of your merit, and justify us for the partiality we all feel in your favor. I esteem the worthy Clayton, and recommend you to deserve his uncommon friendship.

I am, dear Harley,

very sincerely yours,

SAMUEL ELLIS.

L E T T E R VI.

MRS. MENVILLE TO MRS. BERTIE.

YOU have confirmed my happiness, my dear friend; your approbation of my conduct has justified me in the judgment I presumed to pass on myself, and I feel highly gratified on looking back without self-reproach and being entitled to look forward with hope. Mr. Menville is ever attentive to please and amuse me; his generosity is unbounded. I have such a quantity of jewels and fine clothes as might turn the head of a vain woman; for my part, accustomed by my mother from my earliest days to neatness and simplicity in my style of dress, those gaudy ornaments have no other value with me than as a proof of my husband's affection. Yesterday I met with a little incident that disconcerted *me* and I thought threw a momentary cloud over Mr. Menville's countenance: we were engaged to spend the evening with Dr. and Mrs. Ellis; Miss Shepherd, (who you must remember) a gay rattling girl, came in just after tea, and after some lively chat suddenly cried out, "what a wicked creature you are, my dear Mrs. Menville, to monopolize the beaux thus; here you have taken our nabob that we were all pulling caps for, and, to complete our mortification, have deprived us of the only two wretches worth looking at, Harley and Clayton: I was told this morning they are gone on a knight-

knight-errant expedition to Spain in quest of adventures, that you Doctor was in the secret and had received a letter from the *poor, forsaken, Harley*:" she pronounced those last words with an emphasis and a malicious smile in my face; I felt confused, and throwing my eyes on Mr. Menville thought his were fixed on me with a curious and very serious expression in them; this observation increased my disorder; the good Doctor, who saw our embarrassment, said, "the gentlemen are indeed in Spain, and I have been favoured with a letter from Captain Harley, but as I by no means think myself a fit correspondent for a gay officer or a knight-errant, I have declined the honor intended me:" I was a little relieved by the Doctor's answer, and not at all sorry to hear the gentlemen were actually in Spain; for my father having avoided mentioning Harley's name from the time Mr. Menville first addressed me, I had been totally ignorant how he had disposed of himself. Miss Shepherd, however, whether from design or merely for the sake of chat, was not so easily silenced—"what a simpleton (cried she) to throw away his time to so little purpose; I wish he had chosen me for his correspondent I should hardly have declined the offer, for positively he's a charming fellow, and by no means formed to wear the willow; but gold, almighty gold, has more powerful attractions than a red coat and a pretty fellow now-a-days, when vanity makes such large demands for gratification." "We may at least, without breach of charity," said Mrs. Ellis, smiling, "suppose such are *your* sentiments, or you would not sport them thus before company who I flatter myself are no ways

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influenced

influenced by such ungenerous motives." "But, my dear Kitty, don't be so explicit before unmarried men, for your own sake. "Upon my word, madam," said Mr. Menville, gravely, "I believe the young lady is by no means singular in her opinion; we every day see instances of marriages where interested views are alone consulted in the union." "It may be so," replied Mrs. Ellis, coolly, "but I am happy enough to know no such despicable persons in the small circle of my acquaintance." "Lord!" cried the giddy girl, "how serious you are upon the subject; what signifies the *motives* for marriage if a woman makes a good wife?" Pardon me, Miss Shepherd," said Mr. Menville, "if I think it signifies a great deal; I wish to have the affections, the *heart* of my wife, and so would every man of sentiment." "Oh yes!" returned she, you men of sentiment, of *nice honor*, expect a great deal, without considering whether your own *merits* entitle you to the expectation; but wise men are as easily deceived as other people; and if your wife chuses to take the trouble of making you *believe* you possess her heart, it answers all the purposes of reality, 'till your mighty wisdom and self-consequence discovers the contrary." This strange speech was uttered in a very sarcastic, pointed manner; Mr. Menville reddened, I felt confused, and Mrs. Ellis looked uneasy. "Upon my word Kitty," said Miss Ellis, who had not yet spoke, "you are a strange madcap, and sport very freely on a state you are in hopes some day of entering into with very different sentiments I am sure, and therefore, not to mislead Mr. Menville and Mr. Barlow (the curate, who was present) as to
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your real character, I beg you will change the subject." "With all my heart," returned she, laughing, "truth is not to be spoken at all times; therefore I have done; and, a-pr-p's, have a much more delightful subject to descant on; do you know my mother has at length prevailed with my father to take us to London this winter, and we intend going so early as the end of next month; my mother has already written to a friend to get us a ready furnished house, lest the old don should alter his mind." "You forget I am present, I presume, Miss Shepherd," said the doctor. "O! I cry you mercy, sir; I wont say "*old don*" any more: indeed, I am disposed to be a wonderful, dutiful, respectful child, now my wishes are gratified." "There's much merit in that resolution, to be sure;" said Mr. Barlow, smiling. "None of *your sneers*, Mr. Barlow; (retorted she) I have at least the merit of speaking my sentiments without disguise, and I believe, my good sir, a great deal of self-love is at the bottom of our very best actions, if they were fairly scanned—what think you, Mrs. Menville; addressing me suddenly, "do you believe our actions are entirely disinterested? that we perform our several duties always from principle alone, if contrary to the feelings of our hearts?" "A good mind, my dear Miss Shepherd, I should suppose, would find the performance of it's duties the highest gratification of self-love, independent of its claims upon our principles; and 'tis impossible but that the performance of our domestic duties must be closely connected with the feelings of our hearts. "Ah! lord, you are too sententious for me," cried she, "so pray, dear Miss Ellis, oblige us with a
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lively lesson, or a cheerful song, to raise my spirits, which are getting into the humdrums with these old musty morals." Miss Ellis very readily complied, and every one playing in turn, the visit ended without any more particular conversation. In the evening after we returned, Mr. Menville said, Miss Shepherd was a very fine lively girl, and though rather a *little* too volatile, there was much truth in many of her observations. I replied, that she had abundance of vivacity, with, I believed, a very good heart, and I dared say, was a very different character from what she led people to suppose by her mirthful disposition. "O!" returned he, "I admire that cheerful spirit—it keeps one alive:" he then asked a thousand questions about her; I told him her father had been an eminent surgeon, and having acquired, as was believed, a genteel competency, had given up business four or five years past; her mother was the only daughter of an attorney, long since dead; she had been brought up in an expensive style and was, what, in our village, we termed a gay lady; though without any reproach on her character; they had a son in the East-India service, and a younger daughter at a boarding school." Having ended my account of the family, "how comes it (asked he) this family never visited *you*?" I answered, "my father and mother having declined receiving *their* visits, and their manners being entirely opposite, no other intercourse than cold civility had ever taken place between the families." "And *my* attachment to *you*," said he, smiling, "precluded *me* from their attentions, I suppose, however, as I chuse to live sociably I shall encourage the acquaintance when I have an opportunity."

portunity." I made no reply, for neither the mother or daughter are at all to my taste: the *latter* (having frequently met with her at the doctor's) I have always been upon a civil footing with, though I am persuaded I am not a favorite, for Miss Lillis told me, some time since, she was extremely partial to Captain Harley, but finding he paid no attention to her, when she heard a Nabob had purchased the hall, she flattered herself Harley would soon be eclipsed and that the stranger might fall a victim to her charms. Unhappily Mr. Menville's early prepossession in my favour, and constant visits to our house, precluded the plan she projected from taking place; my marriage and Harley's absence has increased her dislike to me, and consequently I can promise myself no pleasure from the acquaintance: I dare say if I expressed any disinclination to it, my husband would readily give it up, as he is always obliging; but I must appear capricious if I do not assign my reasons, and those I have mentioned above you will readily conceive I cannot give to him; I must therefore be passive on the subject and let him act as he thinks proper. We often reject the means of happiness placed within our power, as I have recently experienced in refusing to visit Bath: how happy should I feel in embracing you there, my dear Mrs. Bertie, but 'tis impossible now to urge it; after declining my husband's invitation, there would be an indelicacy towards him if I wished for the journey because you are there. Circumstanced as I am, it behoves me to be particularly careful that Mr. Menville should believe he has no rival in my heart, nor a wish that he is not master of; I

must therefore relinquish the pleasing idea of holding a *personal* communication, and be contented with enjoying as the next possible good, a constant correspondence, which I am persuaded your good-nature and friendship will permit me to enjoy as frequently as your more agreeable avocations will permit. I am truly grateful for your good aunt's wishes, and also for the little interesting narrative—Ah ! my dear, how much is poor Mrs. S— to be pitied, and what an unfeeling wretch is the daughter !

I am ever most sincerely,

your obliged,

EMILY MENVILLE.

L E T T E R III.

MRS. BERTIE TO MRS. MENVILLE.

Bath.

HERE I am my dear friend, and have the pleasure to say my aunt bore the little journey much better than I expected: we have been arrived three days and find there a pretty large number of our acquaintance here in this seat of pleasure and dissipation ; but the friend of my heart is wanting, and that is a void can never be filled up by the votaries of fashion. We have

have not yet been at the rooms; of course you can expect no entertainment; but I would not omit writing for two reasons, first, that knowing my address I might hear from you soon, the other, to give my opinion on the subject of your last letter. I hate that Miss Shepherd, yes I hate her; that she is envious of your excellencies I can easily conceive; few young women have generosity enough to bear with an acknowledged superiority in another, but there appears a malignancy in her heart under the cover of affected levity, she is therefore dangerous; she envies your present situation, and is enraged at the loss of the other gentlemen: beware of her my dear Mrs. Menville—avoid an intimacy as much as possible:—your candid and generous spirit is by no means a match for art and duplicity. Not having the honor of knowing Mr. Menville, I do not presume to form any judgment of him further than one trait in his character has led me into, and on that head I am silent—'tis impossible but he must love and esteem you beyond any woman in the world: were you not superior to most of your sex, you had never been *his wife*, therefore I will not entertain a doubt of your happiness. I have often thought highly of your delicacy, (for I will not suppose any daughter of Eve can be without curiosity in her composition) as you must have heard that I did not live happily with Mr. Bertie; that you never asked any particulars of my situation, many times I have thought to begin the subject, but shall I confess, self-love and a wish not to lessen myself in your esteem has hitherto prevented the communication; for I do not pretend to exculpate myself entirely from blame, yet as your

rankness on a late occasion entitles you to unreservedness on mine, I will mortify myself by relating to you the few particulars of my conduct in the three years I was Mr. Bertie's wife, and trust you will judge with the tenderness of a friend, and pardon where you cannot approve.

I lost both my parents (Colonel and Mrs. Moleworth) at a very early age, when I was too young to know their value; and was so fortunate not to feel their loss from the care and tenderness I have ever experienced in my uncle and aunt's unremitting endeavours to make me happy. My aunt had no children of her own, I was therefore her adopted daughter: the fortune I inherited did not exceed three thousand pounds; soldiers, as your father justly observed, seldom acquire riches, and my parents were young and fashionable, nothing therefore remained for me but my mother's fortune which had been secured to her. This money was placed to the best advantage, and my generous uncle declared neither interest nor principal should be lessened by the expences of my education. The years of my childhood passed in uninterrupted happiness: I had no particular intimates among my own sex, my aunt did not approve of girlish friendships, at an age (she used to say,) when the understandings are not properly informed nor the rectitude of principles assured and established; intimacies between young girls often prove dangerous should there be any defects in the heart of either of them; for the same reason she objected to a boarding school education, where in large seminaries it was impossible to expect all should be equally

equally good, and one girl of faulty principles or depraved heart might too possibly ruin the morals of fifty: I had therefore the happiness of being brought up under her own eye, and had her precepts and example been the rule of my life I might have been happy; but I inherited a great portion of my father's spirit; I was haughty and impetuous naturally; the kindness of my more than parents scarce ever permitted the faults of my disposition to be visible, and *they* thought me all perfection. When I was seventeen I was introduced into the gay world, and on my account my aunt enlarged her parties and extended her acquaintance: being a new face and a reputed great fortune as heiress to my uncle, I had a numerous set of admirers, all equally indifferent to me; but one evening at Lady Paterson's rout Mr. Bertie was introduced as a young West-Indian of fashion and fortune. His person was remarkably handsome, with all that vivacity and fire in his eyes and motions for which those children of the sun are distinguished. I presently caught his attention, and as the gentleman who introduced him was acquainted with my uncle, he was introduced to us particularly, and received an invitation to accompany his friend to a party we were to have the following day. In short, not to tire you, his visits were constantly repeated—our mutual affection was visible, and his proposals being unexceptionable in about five months after his first introduction we were united with the approbation of all our friends. We lived in a style of elegance few private fortunes could exceed, and every day our affection appeared to increase; but this was a state of felicity that
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could not be permanent—no uninterrupted happiness can exist in this life. About twenty months after our marriage, he received letters from abroad relative to his estates there, which required his immediate presence; the necessity was obvious and could not be dispensed with; he was miserable, I was not happy: he ventured one morning to breathe a wish that I would accompany him—I started at the idea of quitting England, and though I truly loved him, refused his request in rather a peremptory manner: he, as lively as myself, cried out hastily, “ ’tis well, *madam*, I find how little share I hold in your affections since you choose to be separated from me.” “ The choice, *sir*,” I replied, haughtily, “ is of your own making; you choose to *leave me*.” “ How unkind and unjust is that reproach:” said he, softening and taking my hand, “ you know, my dear Charlotte, the necessity for my going; a very large share of my property is at stake, and I should do you the greatest injustice to neglect it.” “ I can see no such necessity: you have a large sum in the funds, besides the twenty thousand pounds (which my kind uncle had given me) reserved for my use, and therefore we have sufficient.” “ Heaven knows” (returned he) “ how reluctantly I shall obey this call, but it cannot be given up: I *must* submit to the painful separation if you will not accompany me; but, you, your uncle, the whole world, would despise me if I suffered myself to be wronged and my property lost.” “ You must do as you please;” I answered peevishly, and immediately left the room. My uncle and aunt were to dine with us; when we met, they saw something had ruffled me, and eagerly enquired the cause;

cause; I repeated what had past—my aunt was surprised and vexed: she said, “she hoped Mr. Bertie would not *insist* upon my going:” “Dear Madam,” (I cried) “*insist*! I should hate him for ever if he asked me a second time when he knows ’tis disagreeable.” Hold, my dear niece,” said she, “do not be so hasty; Mr. Bertie has a *right* to your obedience, but I dare say has too much affection and good-nature to press it, if you are unwilling.” “’Tis an unlucky affair,” added my uncle, “but doubtless your husband is right; he *must* unavoidably go over himself:”—finding this was his opinion, I made no reply. At table Mr. Bertie mentioned his intended voyage, which my uncle approved, though he lamented the necessity for his absence. I was rather sullen though my eyes were ready to overflow: he addressed me with his usual kindness, and told my aunt,” that to her affectionate care he must soon leave the treasure infinitely more precious than what he was compelled to seek after. This was the first disagreeable day I had ever known; I felt for his uneasy state of mind, but though I dreaded his absence, I could not consent to quit England and my friends: the subject was never renewed, and in less than a fortnight he parted from me in inexpressible agonies; my grief was little short of his; but I had the support of my friends, *he* parted with all! I fear, my dear Mrs. Menville, you will blame me and think I had very little sensibility, but I do assure you I suffered extremely and needed all my aunt’s kindness to reconcile me to this separation. By the very earliest opportunity I received a letter from him; he had not then reached

reached his destined port, and his melancholy style occasioned a momentary repentance that I had permitted him to depart without me; but I soon reconciled my feelings; I was young, just entered into life, and met with respect and admiration every where: I pursued the dazzling prospect of pleasure with *rather* too much avidity; my uncle and aunt remonstrated now and then, gently, but, conscious of the rectitude of my principles, I imprudently sacrificed the *appearance* of delicacy and decorum, and joined in every festive party proposed to me. I had many dangles; among others, Mr. Howard an elegant young man of fashion was my constant shadow; I was flattered by his attention and respect, and certainly treated him with a degree of preference which arose from esteem only, but which the malicious observers of my conduct failed not to put a very different interpretation on; I incurred censures, which the impropriety of my behaviour assuredly justified, but which I was no ways conscious of deserving from the purity of my sentiments. How easily do we deceive ourselves! Innocent of any real criminal affection, I considered only the gratification of my vanity, and never attended to the admonitions of my aunt, or that decorum a married woman under my particular circumstances ought to have strictly observed. I had during this time received another letter from my husband of his safe arrival, which gave me unfeigned pleasure; for he was as dear to me as ever, notwithstanding my follies and dissipation, and I anxiously wished for his return. One morning my uncle called on me, and after some indifferent chat, said, "perhaps, my dear Charlotte, you

you will not be pleased with this visit when I frankly tell you I am come as an admonitor; I see you look grave, niece; young married women think highly of their own consequence, and in general ill brook advice or reprehension; but though your pride may be offended, your heart I know will do justice to my affection and the motives which induce me to hurt your feelings by proving to you how severely you have wounded *mine*.”—He paused, tears in his eyes—agitated equally by vexation and tenderness, I could only reply, “I beseech you, sir, to go on.” “Well then, my dear child, (for as such I have ever considered you) permit me to ask you, if upon reflection and examination of your conduct for some time past, it is such as your reason can approve or the affection you owe to your worthy husband can justify?” I was startled, he went on. “That your heart and person is equally free from guilt I am entirely confident—admiration and the delusive pleasures of the world have misled, but I trust, not corrupted your heart; a very few of your friends may do justice to your principles, but the world in general judge from appearances, and are much more ready to think unfavorably than otherwise; you will not therefore be surprised to hear you are accused of the blackest crimes, of an improper connexion with Mr. Howard, and the dissipation of your husband’s fortune.” “And, who sir, dares accuse me of such horrid crimes?” said I hastily, interrupting him. “Every body who judges of your conduct,” replied my uncle, “I hear it every where—your aunt is so mortified by the cruel aspersions you have taken pains to deserve, that she dreads going into company,

pany, secludes herself from the world, and considers herself involved in the disgraceful suspicions entertained of you, by having had the care of your education. 'Tis not enough, my dear niece to be really virtuous, we must *appear* so; 'tis a duty we owe to ourselves, our relations, and society in general, to appear what we really are, to hold forth an example of goodness, and by the propriety of our conduct to the world, evince the rectitude of our principles. You are for a time separated from your husband, it is not necessary you should renounce the world or its pleasures, but they should be enjoyed with moderation; a particular decency and decorum ought to be observed, and prove that your affection for your husband is not abated by absence—no particular man should be singled out, however innocently, as a constant companion, lest the world and that very man form conjectures to your disadvantage, and the latter entertain presumptuous hopes which may in their consequences make you despicable in your own eyes, after losing the esteem and respect of your friends. Consider all these things, my dear niece, with attention; consider your own reputation, the honor, the happiness of a worthy man who adores you, the felicity of your friends who have only you to look forward to for their peace or misery in this life, all depends on you. You have good-nature, generosity, and virtuous sentiments, resume your natural character, my dear Charlotte, be guided by the dictates of an unerring monitor, and you will be all your friends can wish for; you will gain more real admiration even from the gay and dissipated, whilst the good and virtuous will love, respect, and esteem you." My uncle could scarcely articulate

late his last words for his emotions. I had been almost choaked with mine, and could neither speak nor shed a tear; he saw my situation, he rose and embraced me: "pardon me, my dear niece, forgive the anxiety of your maternal aunt, your most affectionate uncle; I will leave you to your own reflections, and if you wish to see us, on the first summons, your aunt and myself will attend you." As he was about to leave me, I caught his hand, "no my dearest, my best friend, you shall not leave me, permit me to accompany you, I now hate myself and all my follies, let me fly to my dear aunt and by confession and repentance obtain her pardon for all the errors of my conduct." My good uncle shed tears of joy. I returned with him and was received with transport and real affection. From that day I saw the follies I had been guilty of in their true light—I gave up all my light frivolous acquaintance, received Mr. Howard's visits but seldom, and never without other company present, and by the attention of my aunt and her respectable friends, insensibly regained my own approbation, by enjoying the esteem of the worthy; this period was by far the happiest I had known from Mr. Bertie's absence, but it was of short duration: a letter I received from him announcing his quick return to England, and having settled his affairs in a very advantageous manner, ought to have given me additional pleasure; but there was a coldness, a formality in the style that alarmed me; I consulted my aunt, she made light of my apprehensions, but I saw by her countenance I was justified in them. I suffered the most poignant uneasiness for near three weeks, when cruel doubt was lost in miserable certainty—I flew to his

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his arms with real transport—he coldly saluted me with a reserve in his manner that chilled me to the heart; I burst into tears, he seemed moved, and as if to avoid entering on disagreeable subjects, slightly run over an account of his voyage and success in his business: I tried to recover myself, and congratulated him on having settled his affairs *so soon*; he caught the word, and with a sigh replied, “it was indeed much *sooner* than I expected, or I believe was wished for by others; but come,” said he, rising, “I am much fatigued and shall be glad of rest—I accompanied him, he passed a miserable restless night; I never closed my eyes; I saw an alteration in him which I could only account for by supposing some officious person had informed him of my former imprudent conduct; I was therefore resolved to come to an explanation, for my soul sickened at the idea of being thought unworthily of by him, nor could I bear the torture of suspense. At breakfast, when the same sorrow and reserve was visible, I ventured to enquire the cause of it; “neither the cause nor effects can be strange to you, I should think,” was all his answer. I told him, that I believed some strong prejudice had taken possession of his mind, but that conscious of my own innocence though I could not exculpate myself entirely from blame, yet it was of such a nature as by no means deserved his present behaviour.” Before he could reply, my uncle and aunt were announced, and then he received most cordially; after the first salutations, my uncle turning to me cried, “I congratulate you, my dear niece, on your present happiness.” This was too much—I could not restrain my tears, which greatly surprised them. Mr. Ber-

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tie rose to leave the room, I stopped him; "stay, sir, and unfold to my best friends how I have offended, and wherefore I have deserved your unkind treatment: and do you, my dear aunt, acquaint Mr. Bertie with all my follies; extenuate nothing, let him sit in judgment on my worst actions, let him also know my repentance, and then if he cannot acquit me, let us separate for ever." I flew to my chamber overwhelmed with sorrow—in about an hour my good friends joined me; compose yourself, my dear niece;" said my aunt, "your husband is undeceived, and is really noways to blame, considering the information he has received. Some officious person has painted your conduct in the blackest colours malice could invent; and the same hand informed him of your lavish expences during the first four months of his absence; I must own, both your uncle and myself were startled at the sums he mentioned; we have, however, I hope, removed the veil of prejudice from his eyes—he is prepared to see you with a different opinion of your conduct, and desires nothing more may be said on the subject." I felt humbled and indignant; I scarcely knew if I should follow my aunt, or reject his apology; whilst I was doubtful, he entered the room, and embracing me warmly, forgive me, my dear Charlotte, *if* I have wronged you, pronounce my pardon and let there be no further drawback on our happiness." "'Tis for you to forgive," I replied, melted by his address, "since you are the person wronged, and I deserved to incur your suspicions; but do me the justice to believe, though I have been vain, foolish, and extravagant, my heart has never erred—*that* has always been yours, and yours alone."

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He appeared much affected, and in the most endearing manner requested all former occurrences should be buried in oblivion. For some days we lived in perfect happiness, but as his return obliged us to mix with the world, I quickly found the seeds of jealousy were rooted in his mind; he watched every look and word of mine with an eye of suspicion; if any gentleman addressed me with common civility, his looks were quite furious; he would be peevish and melancholy without assigning any reason—treat his acquaintance with that chilling civility that soon drove them from his house, and then complain of being deserted and neglected. I ventured two or three times to remonstrate and point out the impropriety of his conduct, but his behaviour on such occasions quite terrified me—he would look wild and furious, sometimes snatch me to his arms and cry, “ah Charlotte! I was once too happy, cursed be the time I left England.” At other times he would silence me with a stern air and imprecate himself, me, and all the world; in short we were soon very unhappy; his temper was entirely changed, and, conscious that I had by my imprudence given some colour for his suspicions, I felt mortified and distressed, yet as I made it my unremitting endeavor to please him, to erase every unfavorable idea from his mind, and as I had recovered the good opinion of my most respectable friends, at times I could scarcely brook his capricious behaviour without resenting it. For many months we went on in this uncomfortable manner; my uncle and aunt saw and pitied my situation, but small was the consolation they could afford me. One day, after a very restless night on his part, he said, with great agitation, “Charlotte, I
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am about to leave England within this fortnight.” —“ Good God!” I exclaimed, (much surprised) if that is your intention I hope you will take me with you.” “ No,” replied he, sighing, “ *that cannot* be; I believe I have not treated you lately as you deserve; I feel an alteration in my disposition, and I know you are often distressed by my behaviour; do not weep, my dear Charlotte, my absence I hope will not be a long one, and when I return I trust we shall meet more happy than ever.” “ I see” cried I, “ that I am no longer beloved, that you entertain suspicions injurious to *your* peace and *my* honor; but you wrong me and yourself; never, for a single moment, have I ceased to love you, never have I violated the vows I made at the altar.” “ I must, I do believe you—” said he, eagerly, “ impossible that angel form and delicate mind could forget the reverence due to herself—but my mind is disturbed, I wish for a time to change the scene, that I may return to you with recovered spirits, and deserve your affectionate attention: I have an uncle, as you have heard me mention, at Lisbon, I intend going there for a few months.” “ Ah! take me with you,—” I cried, “ do not make me miserable under the idea that you are separated from me by choice—” he was greatly affected, I shed floods of tears, but his resolution was unshaken. Being convinced that my own folly and imprudence had drawn this affliction upon us both, I determined during his absence to reside at my uncle’s; he opposed this design, entreated me in the most earnest manner to remain in my own house, uncontrolled mistress of his fortune, but my resolution was fixed, and to shorten my story,
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the same day he left England, I quitted my house. Happy had it been for me, had I prudently taken that step when he first left me, how many miserable hours, how many bitter upbraidings from my own heart, might then have been avoided! My affectionate friends said and did every thing to console me, and by the first packet I received a letter in the fondest style from Mr. Bertie, which was more efficacious to my peace than all their endeavours. Alas! my tranquillity was of short duration—I impatiently expected the next packet, I heard of its arrival, I had no letters, and was truly miserable: my uncle and aunt, I observed, partook of my sorrow without any exertions to remove it. I caught them several times in low and earnest discourse, and judged there was some secret kept from me; I addressed my aunt and conjured her to disguise nothing, as apprehension and suspense was worse than death. After some preparation I learnt the dreadful intelligence: a letter had arrived from Mr. Bertie's uncle to mine, with the shocking account that his nephew and three other gentlemen going on a party of pleasure on the river, by some accident the boat was overfet—my dear unfortunate husband, with two others, were drowned, the third gentleman being a skilful swimmer was taken up by a vessel. Judge, my dearest Mrs. Menville, what must have been my feelings—I considered myself as the murderer of my husband—I lost my peace, my reason, and for some weeks was insensible to every thing—to the attentive kindness of my friends I was indebted for my recovery, but for many months, sorrow and remorse preyed on my heart and rendered me dead to every sense of consolation; I looked back with horror on my light and frivolous

volous behaviour, and though I could charge myself with no crime, yet the highest degree of imprudence was certainly imputable to me: the vanity, the coquetry of a married woman is wholly inexcusable, but particularly so in the absence of her husband. The world had been severe in their strictures on my conduct, and the consciousness of deserving that severity, by the little attention I paid to appearances, embittered also by reflection that the censures I incurred had destroyed my husband's peace, driven him from me, and was the cause of his premature death, altogether made me completely wretched. Happy is the wife who can look back without self-reproach when deprived of a beloved husband! Warned by my example, let not any young woman suppose if she is conscious of no crime, she may indulge the gaiety of her heart, take pride in the admiration she excites, and sacrifice the public opinion to the gratifications of her own vanity, with impunity: 'tis not sufficient to be *really* virtuous, 'tis a duty we owe society to *appear* such, and the neglect of it is sure to be attended with the contempt of the world, and unavailing repentance to ourselves. My uncle, who dreaded the effect of my grief might destroy my health, proposed going abroad for a year or two, a scheme I gladly assented to, for every object in England was hateful to me. We soon set off for Paris, where I first saw the amiable Mrs.— whose little story I have related to you: we made a tour through France and Italy, and after a residence abroad of near three years I returned to England in good health and spirits; and though now and then disagreeable retrospections will obtrude, yet time, that universal dispeller of sorrow, has restored my peace.

peace. And now, my dear Mrs. Menville, I have ventured to shew you how unworthy I am of the kind partiality you have honored me with, but which it is my darling wish by my subsequent conduct to deserve; your very favourable opinion of me has frequently given a pang to my heart from conscious unworthiness, yet, I think I deserve some degree of credit, I am now but three and twenty, and have quite a matronly air which very often subjects me to ridicule, but the five past years of my life has taught me lessons of prudence I shall never forget, because learnt by bitter experience. This enormous packet must go under two covers; I have dedicated a day and almost a night to you; to-morrow I launch into the world, an observer, but I trust, not a partaker of its follies. Write to me very speedily and tell me you love me still if my happiness is dear to you, for this last eighteen months of my life, honored with your friendship, is by far the happiest period of it.

Ever your's,

CHARLOTTE BERTIE.

L E T T E R VII.

MRS. MENVILLE TO MRS. BERTIE.

ACCEPT, my dearest madam, of my warmest thanks for your obliging and much-wished for communications: you have indeed experienced much trouble and sorrow, but I think judge more severely of your own conduct than your

your worst enemy would presume to do. You could not think favourably of my sincerity if I said you was entirely free from blame, but in my opinion those persons must have very little candour indeed who do not exculpate you from being answerable for the misfortune which befel Mr. Bertie, which was surely owing to the impetuosity of his own disposition. I acknowledge with you that a married woman's conduct cannot be too exactly circumspect, and that the illiberality of the world will generally magnify follies into vices very foreign to the heart. My small knowledge of mankind has been hitherto confined to the good and worthy part of it; pray with me, my dear Mrs. Bertie, that I may not experience a more painful acquaintance with it, for I am about to mix with that world which too often corrupts the *best* hearts. Book-knowledge is very insufficient to guard us from its delusions, and my amiable and respected parents, by secluding themselves always in the country, were very incompetent judges of the follies which fashion has stamped into the necessary accomplishments of genteel life. Mr. Menville has lived pretty much in the gay world, and to him I am indebted for my information, to prepare me for the scenes I must soon be a witness of. In short, my dear friend, we are preparing for a London journey, (such it is to me who have never been ten miles from my native village) the scheme was suddenly adopted as you shall hear. Two days after I wrote my last letter, I received a card, containing "Mr. Mrs. and Miss Shepherd's compliments and intended themselves the honor of waiting on Mr. and Mrs. Menville the following evening." My husband requested I would join in his re-

quest for their company to dinner, as (he said), he hated the formality of an evening visit in the country ; I complied, and an answer was dispatched which seemed to give him much pleasure. My father calling in soon after, I mentioned the intended visit, as I knew he would not like to meet them ; he appeared very grave, " my dear Emily," (said he) " as 'tis Mr. Menville's wish to be on terms of intimacy with them, you must acquiesce, but I entreat you to extend your acquaintance no farther than common civility requires, they are not characters I approve of ; Doctor Ellis from his situation thought himself compelled to receive their visits, but that worthy family do not esteem the Shepherds ; proud, designing, frivolous people, they are incapable of friendship, and have no rectitude of principle — obey your husband in receiving them politely, but never seek an intimacy." I thanked my dear father for his advice, which I promised implicitly to observe. The following day our guests came, dressed out in the very extremity of fashion and loaded with ornaments ; I received them with civility and attention. " I am extremely happy, my dear madam, cried Mrs. Shepherd, as soon as she was seated, " I am *particularly* glad of an opportunity *offered* by Mr. Menville, of cultivating a friendly intimacy with you." " And I," said the lively daughter, " am rejoiced to see you altogether ; I flatter myself if Mrs. Menville mixes with more cheerful people, she will get rid of that gravity which sits so ill on a young woman of nineteen, though she *has* become a matron." " We are not all blest with an equal flow of spirits, Miss Shepherd, nor has every one that happy vivacity which *you* possess ; however you may be assured I shall study to
make

make myself agreeable in the eyes of Mr. Men-ville and his friends." Ah! lord," (said she) "how sentimental is that speech! do pray, my dear madam, drop formal speeches, and let us enjoy ourselves like old acquaintances of a long date." "You are too lively, Kitty," cried the father, stroking down his laced ruffles." "Not at all," exclaimed Mr. Menville, hastily, "I adore such charming spirits" "Indeed," said she, with an expressive smile, "that is beyond my comprehension I own, but one sees wonderful changes every moon." We do indeed, thought I with a sigh, for observation nor the company was not calculated to raise my spirits, on the contrary they were unusually depressed; happily for me the ball was so well kept up between Mr. Menville and his guests, that my silence was, I believe, unnoticed. In the evening the Doctor and family came to tea, which greatly relieved me; with them I *could* talk, and upon the whole we grew a cheerful party. Mr. Menville insisted they should all stay supper, the invitation was accepted, —we sat down to cards—Miss Shepherd and Mr. Menville against the Doctor and myself— we were not fortunate, the others played in high spirits. "There is sometimes great shrewdness in old proverbs:" observed Miss Shepherd, "ill luck at cards, foretells good luck in a husband—you prove the truth of the observation, Mrs. Menville, for I think you *never* win. I remember one evening at the Doctor's, playing against you and your quondam lover, Captain Harley; you neither of you understood what cards you played, and I believe lost pretty considerably." Judge what were my emotions at this ill-timed remark; I strove to recover myself, and replied in a careless manner, though

in a faltering voice, "*not very considerably*, for as I am no adept in cards I seldom play with the hazard of losing much, being, as you observe, generally unsuccessful." A silence of some minutes succeeded, which was broken by the Doctor, who rallied himself and me on our ill-luck, "but if we have the proverb on our side, my good neighbour, we have little right to regret the loss of our money." "True Doctor," replied Mr. Menville, in a significant tone, "and I must console myself by *pocketing* the money, if that same old law is inimical to me." "Ah, you wretch!" exclaimed the young lady, tapping his shoulder, "you are convinced you are fortunate, it is only the poor spinster who has reason to dread her future lot." "The man of your choice then must be insensible, or a brute, if you are otherwise than happy," replied her partner. "Well, now that's very gallantly said;" cried she, "I give you credit, my dear Mrs. Menville, for the politeness of your husband." "Mr. Menville has too much discernment, madam, to think otherwise;" was all my reply. Supper being announced soon after, relieved me from my disagreeable situation, and having something to do at table I recovered my spirits. In the course of conversation, Mrs. Shepherd mentioned, with much exultation, their intended jaunt to London.—"What in October?" cried Mr. Menville, "you will find nobody in town 'till after Christmas—don't think of it, my dear madam." "Ah!" said she, "but I have taken a house and therefore we must go now." "Aye," grumbled out Mr. Shepherd, "I told you this was an improper time of the year, but you and your girl were so obstinate, you are rightly served." "Well, Mr. Shep-

Shepherd, I wish you would be quiet," cried the Lady, "the fault is yours; I have plagued you ever since you left off business to take us to London, and now we teased you out of your consent, if I had not sent to secure a house, you would, I dare say, have changed your mind in another month." "Very possibly," answered he, dryly, "and perhaps it would be the better for us all if I had done so before the house was taken—however, the less company the less dissipation, and by Christmas you will be safe home again I hope." This hope produced an altercation which had like to have ended seriously; for the old man said, the "*first* loss was the best, and it was only forfeiting the rent of the house, and he should save money by keeping them at home." This speech cooled both mother and daughter, and they appeared contented with the moderate pleasures the season would permit them to enjoy. Before they left us, an invitation was given, and accepted by Mr. Menville, that we should spend the day with them the next but one; I made no objection of course, and the party was settled: thus a violent intimacy was established, equally against my judgment and inclinations; for they are not persons who improve on acquaintance, or are at all calculated to inform the mind of a young married woman almost a stranger to the world. On the day appointed we returned the visit, and there, to my no small astonishment, Mr. Menville proposed to me joining their party to London; before I could reply, the mother and daughter, with eager transport, joined in the request, and scarce left me the power of a negative had I been so inclined; but I affected no will of my own, and therefore told the ladies, a request of Mr. Men-

ville's was a law to me, and I should be happy to accompany him when and wherever he pleased. He made me a slight compliment, and then entered largely into the subject of the various delightful modes of killing time in London. He has a very elegant house in Bedford-square; Mrs. Shepherd regretted that their house being in Albemarle Street, she found by his description, the situations were very widely apart.—“Why 'tis rather unlucky, indeed,” cried Mr. Menville, “for as we go entirely to be in a party, we shall be a cursed way asunder: upon my soul, I think you had better go with us *en famille*; don't you think so, my dear?” addressing me, “our house is very large and can accommodate *your friends* with great convenience, and as you are a stranger in town, it will be more comfortable to have companions with you, don't you think so, *my love*?” “I can certainly make no objections if the plan is agreeable to you and the ladies,” was all my reply. “But what can be done about the house?” asked Mr. Shepherd. “Why, write the people word you don't take it, but will pay the rent 'till it is let, or make any other trifling satisfaction.” This mode was readily adopted—the whole family was in high spirits—the Ellis family overwhelmed with surprise, and myself, in contradiction to my feelings, obliged to assume a satisfaction, far, very far, from my heart. At night, when the occurrences of the preceding week were in review before me, they appeared like a dream, so rapid had been the intimacy which, in absolute strangers to each other, had been carried to such a height in so short a time: to have persons as inmates of my house, whose dispositions and manners ill-accorded with mine, could afford

ford me no pleasure in the prospect. It instantly occurred to me, to procure my husband's leave to invite Miss Ellis of our party; I assumed courage and mentioned it—I watched his countenance and saw a momentary gloom on his features, but recollecting, I suppose, how readily I submitted to *his* wishes, he answered me with more kindness than I expected, “by all means, my love, if her company will contribute to your satisfaction.” I felt greatly obliged, and expressed my thanks in a manner that pleased him, for, snatching me to his arms, he cried, with some emotion, “I should be always happy if certain of making *you* so.” I hastened to the Doctor, and strongly solicited permission from him and Mrs. Ellis to invite their amiable daughter. I knew the value of the favor, because it deprived them of their charming companion entirely to oblige me, yet my kind friends accorded to my wishes at the first word, and with this reason; “I never was more astonished (said Mrs. Ellis) than by Mr. Menville's invitation to the Shepherds, surely they are not persons such as his wife ought to be introduced into the world with, and I wish he may not repent it: their minds and yours are very dissimilar, and I foresee you will be much alone, or dragged abroad against your inclination; to prevent the former Mary shall accompany you, and I am sure, with such a friend as Mrs. Menville, she will partake of both pleasure and improvement.” I thanked the dear lady for her kindness, and tripped into the garden with a light heart to find her worthy daughter; she was delighted with the permission I had obtained; “nothing (said she) could make me more happy than your society, but I am much mis-

ken if your other guests will feel any pleasure from my being of your party—there is too much selfishness in that family to wish for any sharers in their expected happiness.” “However that may be,” answered I, “the principal part of my felicity (exclusive of my husband’s share in it) must be derived from you.” I bid her hasten all necessary preparations, and returned home with great satisfaction. This is the present state of my affairs—the Shepherds know Miss Ellis goes with us, but, whatever may be their private sentiments, *express* no dissatisfaction; Kitty is a constant visitor daily.

My dear father was at first greatly chagrined, but with much persuasion I have prevailed on him, to follow us within a fortnight on a visit to my uncle. I impatiently expect to hear of your Bath amusements, write soon that I may hear from you before I leave the country.

Most sincerely your’s,

EMILY MENVILLE.

L E T T E R IX.

CAPTAIN HARLEY TO MISS ELLIS.

Madrid.

WITHOUT intending the slightest disrespect to the worthy Doctor, he must permit me to felicitate myself on the change in my correspondent; yes, my dear Miss Ellis, I embrace with joy the opportunity now offered me of expressing to you the sincere esteem I ever felt from the first moment your amiable character

rafter was open to me, and the attention, the kind concern, on your features when I took a hasty leave of you, has left an impression never to be forgotten. The situation of my mind but ill qualifies me for an entertaining correspondent, yet I will endeavour to divest myself of selfish feelings, and give you some little account of our amusements here.

This city has undergone wonderful changes within these few years; it was formerly nasty beyond conception, the manners of the people most disagreeably proud and reserved, the men jealous to an extreme, the ladies shut up and excluded from society: such we are told *has been* the customs and manners in Spain, and such it *still is* in some provinces, but in Madrid things are greatly altered: The streets are now sweet and clean, you can walk under balconies without fear of spoiling your clothes, or offending your senses: the Spaniards are no longer gloomy and unsocial; the grandees, particularly polite to strangers, (of any degree of rank) make sumptuous entertainments, and unbend as freely as any English nobleman. They are in general very rich, and rather supposed in common matters to be avaricious, yet there is one trait in their character that contradicts the assertion, which is their great humanity to their old domestics; they are never discharged when unfit for service—they are retained in their houses and comfortably provided for without labour, or even feeling the sense of an obligation, since 'tis a customary indulgence—what a lesson to Englishmen! The ladies enjoy nearly as much freedom in their company and conversations as our country-women; they are very striking in their appearance; their figures are graceful, their eyes and hair remarkably fine, in-

deed the former have so much fire and expression in them that they would be irresistible were it not for one defect which is particularly displeasing to an Englishman, they have generally very bad teeth and entirely neglect them, the consequence of which is obvious, and destroys the effects of their other charms. They are very lively, and both sexes distractedly fond of a dance called the fandango, the instant the music begins they quit every other pursuit and fly with such eagerness to the dance as if they had no other business in life.

The Spanish women marry very early, and certainly preserve a decorum of manners which creates respect; but they are by no means secluded from society, and French fashions, customs and manners daily gain ground in Madrid. Their serenades I am particularly delighted with; nothing can be conceived more pleasant than to ramble through different streets and be entertained with little concerts, and sometimes exquisite voices; this gallant mode of expressing admiration to the objects they adore is surely far preferable to the dull customs of other countries, where a real lover, from respect and reverence perhaps, sighs for months in secret without assuming courage to declare his passion; now a serenade does the business at once, and cannot offend the delicacy of his mistress.

I have an invitation to dine with Count Ossuna (a grandee of amiable manners and character) to-morrow; he has, I am told, two daughters remarkably handsome, several rencounters have happened from different parties serenading under their balconies, but they are not known to have a favored lover as yet.

Next week a bull-feast is to be exhibited; curiosity will make me a spectator, but at present
I conceive

I conceive 'tis a diversion which will very ill accord with my feelings, for, alas! my dear Miss Ellis, neither absence, change of situation, nor variety of objects can enable me to bear my severe disappointment without eternal sorrow and regret. You know the value of the treasure I have lost, *you* therefore can allow for that heart-felt grief which to another person might appear ridiculous and extravagant. I have no other consolation than what arises from the consideration that I have sacrificed my happiness to secure her's—may she experience every felicity that riches can procure—may she enjoy that perfect happiness in a married life, it would have been my pride and study to have *procured for her*; and then divested of all selfish wishes, I will rejoice where she has cause for joy, and in her peace and tranquillity endeavour to find my own! Impressed with sentiments like these, I flatter myself my dear Miss Ellis will not scruple to honor me with her confidence, to inform me of the happiness of her friend, and sometimes descend to those little particulars which will ever be interesting to the bosom of friendship, though apparently of little consequence to the eye of indifference: in return, I will be an attentive observer of every occurrence here which is likely to be productive of any amusement to you.

My worthy friend Clayton joins me in the most respectful remembrance to the good Doctor, Mrs. Ellis and their fair daughter.

I am, particularly, Dear Madam,

their and your much obliged

and affectionate humble servant,

FREDERIC HARLEY..

L E T-

LETTER X.

MRS. MENVILLE TO MRS. BERTIE.

London, Bedford-square.

WITHOUT waiting for a return to my last letter, I take up my pen to inform you of our safe arrival yesterday at noon in Bedford-square : we were a large party ; Mrs. and Miss Shepherd and their female attendant with Mr. Menville in the coach, Miss Ellis and myself in the chariot, another coach with women servants, my husband's valet, butler, and three footmen on horseback—the weather was uncommonly fine, which, with my agreeable companion, made the journey delightful, and when we alighted, Mr. Menville observed he had never seen me look so well nor so happy. “ And where is the wonder of that ? ” cried Miss Shepherd, “ the very idea of being in London sets every female heart a palpitating with pleasure, and that you know is a great beautifier to the complexion.” “ Why, indeed ” returned Mr. Menville, “ you have your full share of the advantage, for you are all animation.” She smiled at the compliment, and I did the honors of my house as well as I could, and having, with the assistance of the house-keeper, conducted them to their several apartments, I retired to my own.

The mansion is very large and handsome, the situation airy and pleasant, but to that you are no stranger ; 'tis furnished most superbly, and certainly to every indifferent person I must appear uncommonly fortunate in being the mistress of it. Kitty I think seems to take officious pains continually

tinually to remind me of my obligations to my husband, by exclamations of Mr. Menville's grandeur, generosity, and my great happiness. I am far from holding riches or grandeur in contempt, on the contrary I enjoy both, as giving pleasure to my dear father in seeing me so well settled, and in having the power often of contributing to the felicity of others; nor have I any objection to a handsome equipage and fine clothes; though I could have been contented without either, it would be affectation in a young woman of my age not to feel some satisfaction in the enjoyment of them; and, were I sure my present situation caused no disquietude in the bosom of another person, I think, I should be very unworthy Mr. Menville's affection if I was *not* happy—but so it is and ever will be in this life, there is always some little bitter ingredient that mixes with our best enjoyments!

I sent this morning to my uncle's, and was much mortified to be informed he and my dear Harry set off for Devonshire; previous to the information I sent of our intention to visit town—I have wrote to my father and requested he will still hold his design of coming, and take up his residence with us, but I much fear his objections to part of my family will over-rule my wishes.

I must quit my pen as the carriage is at the door to take us to some fashionable shops that we may be equipped in a proper style for the theatre this evening.

Friday Morning, October 5th.

I found it impossible, my dear friend, to resume my pen yesterday; the important employments of chusing caps, hair-dressing, consulting what

what colours best suited our complexions, with Mrs. Shepherd's troublesome winking in and out of my dressing-room, left me not a moment to myself for the remainder of the day.

Miss Ellis has been in London before, to her and Mr. Menville there can be nothing new, but to the Shepherd's and myself all was surprise and novelty; yet though a stranger to every scene that presented itself, I, nevertheless, often blushed for my companions, whose troublesome questions and ignorant exclamations, frequently excited a suppressed smile of contempt in the persons who served us, and who indeed were generally so well dressed and so polite, it was with difficulty I could venture to express my wants, or permit them to attend on me; however, the Shepherd's bought a world of finery, and their money with our very elegant carriage and liveries procured us more respect than I am sure our manners entitled us to.

We drove round so many squares and streets that my head was quite giddy with the variety of objects, and I should have thought the town full had not Mr. Menville, at dinner complained *there was no body in it!* "I don't know what you can do with yourselves," said he, with a discontented air, "there is no creature in town, nor any sort of amusement to vary the scene—I wish we had gone to Bath." "Well, and why can't we go then?" cried Kitty, suppose we go there next week?" (my heart beat with hope, but I was silent.) "No," replied he, "tis not now worth while to make new arrangements, in another month the town will fill a little, 'till then we must make short excursions to Richmond, Windsor, and the neighbouring villages." "O, that will be delightful!" exclaimed she, "don't
you

you approve of the scheme, Mrs. Menville?" "Certainly," I answered, "whatever affords pleasure to my husband and *his friends* must be agreeable to me." "Well, for my part," said Mrs. Shepherd, "I think the town full enough now, I am sure we could hardly get served in the shops, and there were people enough in the streets, besides, I doat on plays, and long to see them in London." "Lord, Mamma!" answered Miss, "we shall have time enough to see plays and operas and every other entertainment during *the winter*."

These last words started me a little; the house they had taken in town was only for six weeks, being engaged to a member of parliament at Christmas, nor was it at all intended they should exceed that time, and Mr. Shepherd was to have been of the party, but no sooner had Mr. Menville offered *his* house than the old man declined going, throwing all the expence of the jaunt from himself, and now they give oblique hints of continuing with us for the winter: another thing which has given me some concern, is, that Mr. Menville has appointed Mr. Shepherd his agent or steward, to manage all his estates in that neighbourhood; receive rents, &c. did you ever know such infatuation and confidence on so short an acquaintance? I know it will vex my father, but we have no right to interfere." "Ah! my dear Mrs. Bertie, with all the advantages attending a marriage beyond our hopes and expectations, there are considerable draw backs; a consciousness of obligation affects a mind of sensibility; the slightest expression of indifference—a careless air—words of no real import, nor perhaps intended to convey any particular meaning, *all* distress a feeling mind, and every day's experience

rience convinces me that an equality in birth and fortune is an absolute requisite to a happy union. But I forget my entertainment at the theatre, to you where there is no novelty there can be no amusement in my remarks—that I wept for the distresses of Mrs. Beverly, or laughed at the lively Beatrice, is but natural; yet I assure you I felt sensations to which before I had been a stranger, and altho the house was crowded by well-drest people, and every object was new to me, my attention was so entirely riveted to the stage that I had neither eyes nor ears for any thing else. What exquisite, though opposite, talents does Mrs. Siddons and Mrs. Jordan possess! Whilst I stay in London I am persuaded the theatre will be my favorite amusement. Several gentlemen who knew Mr. Menville came into our box and were introduced to me and *my friends* as my husband calls them, but that is a term *my heart* will never allow them, though I hope never to be deficient in politeness and civility.

This morning Mr. Menville and his guests are gone to the park, I declined being of the party as did Miss Ellis, both being desirous of writing to our friends. I shall send off this letter that you may know of our arrival and write me immediately; but shall resume my pen at every opportunity, journal-wise, and bespeak your advice and correction with the sincerity becoming our friendship, relative to my conduct in this new world, which I enter upon with reluctance and anxiety. Some gentlemen dine here to-day and in the evening we go to the other theatre. Present my best respects to your worthy uncle and aunt, and believe me always

Your sincere and obliged

EMILY MENVILLE.
LETTER

L E T T E R XI.

MRS. BERTIE TO MRS. MENVILLE.

Bath.

YOUR letters, my dear friend, have surprised, but to deal sincerely with you, have afforded me no pleasure: I am mortified that you should be in London just as I have quitted it, but much more so that such improper companions should be forced upon you; that Miss Ellis is with you is my only consolation, for I dislike the Shepherds exceedingly; I will not say all upon my mind to say, lest you should be displeased at my want of charity, but I am very sorry Mr. Menville has entered so warmly into an intimacy which may be productive of much mischief to him; however I will not pre-judge, but wait the event and make my own observations; for *you*, my dear Mrs. Menville, *you* have only to follow the dictates of your own heart, and you can never err.

I have the pleasure to tell you that I think my aunt's health is considerably better; my uncle has a slight fit of the gout which makes him a little peevish, but I hope will have a short duration.

I have been twice at the rooms, the first night with Lord and Lady Lovejoy, who introduced to my notice two gentlemen of such opposite characters that I am likely to be greatly amused by the contrast. Sir Charles Wentworth is about thirty, graceful in his person and manners, of a very serious disposition, and with such high
sentiments

sentiments of honor as would qualify him for a Knight-errant were the days of chivalry to be revived ; in short he is brave, merciful, strict in his principles, more of a philosopher than the man of fashion, a despiser of the present modes, and only that he is neither so *very* wise nor so *very* formal, a perfect Sir Charles Grandison : he is related to Lord Lovejoy and highly esteemed by him, and is the first I ever felt myself afraid of ; with him you cannot trifle though he is cheerful, nor enter freely into conversation because his understanding and knowledge of mankind appears of the superior kind, and the result of much study and observation, though he never obtrudes his remarks but when called upon. This gentleman I conceive is likely to remain single, half the women in the world he must despise, and the other half are more likely to *fear* than love him.

Mr. Gaywell is a young man of very considerable fortune, handsome in his person, a very great beau in his dress, and a coxcomb in his manners ; idolizes his own pretty figure, thinks every woman who sees must love him, and with a very shallow understanding is perpetually talking to *display* his white teeth, and betray his ignorance. When a boy his favorite study was romances, and all his knowledge of the ancients is confined to books of chivalry : he lost his father at an early age, and has been educated at home under his mother's eye by an ignorant tutor, who found his own advantage in gaining mamma's esteem by indulging her dear Jacky. Being now of age, in possession of his fortune, his first entrance into the world was last winter in town, where he commenced beau, and some ladies of mamma's acquaintance admiring
his

his handsome face, the poor youth fancied himself an Adonis, and is come to Bath full of conceit, pertness, and a self-assurance of being the admiration of all the gay belles of this fashionable world. Lady Lovejoy having formerly known his delighted mamma, at the pump-room one morning renewed the acquaintance, and both she and her son were introduced to me; since which I have met Sir Charles Wentworth and him several times, and they have both been of our private parties. Think what a contrast, Sir Charles views him with pity and complacency, whilst the all-accomplished Mr. Gaywell eyes the other with contempt, and, conscious of his fine clothes and superior fortune, thinks himself the first man in the company, a degree of presumption one would hardly expect from an ignorant youth brought up in the country, yet I have generally observed the most illiterate of both sexes have the largest share of vanity and self-consequence.

My uncle, who enjoys characters more than any man I know, is highly amused with Mr. Gaywell and his mamma, whilst my aunt pities them both, and has two or three times tried to persuade the latter to send her son abroad with a sensible, intelligent man who was capable of informing his mind; but she cannot bear the idea of a separation, and appears much surprised my aunt should think he wants *any* information. I told my aunt, it was labour-in vain work to alter her prejudices, and cruel to destroy an illusion which constitutes Mrs. Gaywell's happiness, that of believing her son the handsomest, most accomplished youth of the age; for my part I pay him great attention, and consequently am a most prodigious favorite.

Bath

Bath is at present very full of company, but there is no variation in the amusements—the same round every season, that in fact it is only London in miniature. In the next house to ours resides a capital cheesemonger's wife and two daughters, whose showy equipage and high style of dress excited my curiosity to know who they were, for there appeared a something in their manners that did not accord with their appearance; Doctor Frampton, who knows every body, told me, on enquiry, their names were Hamwood, the father a man of large fortune and extensive business; the mother, a pawnbroker's daughter, with a great deal of money, a large portion of ignorance, vulgarity, and self-conceit: the daughters agreeable enough in their persons, with the common accomplishments of a boarding school — that is a smattering of *every thing*, but proficient in nothing but vanity; heartily despising their mother, and lady-expectants from the knowledge of their large fortunes and a tolerable portion of self-consequence. This is their second season at Bath, and doubtless they hope yet to captivate some indigent right honorable, or needy Baronet, for a *title*, it seems, *it must be*. From these neighbours, if the term may be allowed at Bath, I shall make some further demands for amusement, occasionally, when tired of Mr. Gaywell. I am charmed, my dear friend, with your intention of writing journal-wise, and I promise you to pick up all I can for your amusement here: meantime I repeat my caution, beware of Miss Shepherd — politeness you cannot omit in your own house, but particular intimacy even there may be avoided—she is artful and envious. Adieu, my amiable friend,
that

that your happiness may equal your deserts is the constant wish of

Your sincere and affectionate
CHARLOTTE BERTIE.

L E T T E R XII.

MRS. MENVILLE TO MRS. BERTIE.

London.

I Finished my last letter with informing you that we expected company at dinner, and were to attend Covent Garden theatre in the evening; I now resume my pen to give, my dear Mrs. Bertie, the occurrences of the day.

Mr. Menville and the ladies returned home in high spirits, in time to dress; they had purchased several elegant trinkets, such as necklaces, ear-rings, bracelets, &c. and when they joined me in the drawing-room made a most splendid appearance; Miss Ellis viewed them with astonishment, they enjoyed her surprise by significant looks at each other.

Sir William Pritchard and Mr. Colemore were announced and introduced to me and the company, and soon after a Mr. Martin and a Mr. Thurkill completed the party. The two former gentlemen had the appearance of men of fashion, but the other two were exactly the reverse; you will accuse me of weakness perhaps when I own to you that I felt a cold shiver and an antipathy which I could not repress, the moment they were introduced to me, though Mr. Martin payed me very particular attention,
and

and I was displeased with myself for, perhaps, an unjust prejudice which surely is wrong to entertain at the first view of any one. We went to the theatre a large party, and I was extremely well entertained with the Dramatist and Merry Mourners.—The gentlemen returned to sup with us, and, to do them justice, were all polite and entertaining; yet I thought Miss Shepherd appeared displeased she did not attract *all* the notice, for she looked quite peevish when any attention was payed to others, and Mr. Colemore was particularly polite to Miss Ellis. We parted at a late hour—the next morning Mrs. Shepherd proposed a party to Richmond, which was agreed on for the following day, almost without consulting me: after breakfast we went to a capital auction in Pall-Mall, which proved an expensive business to Mr. Menville, for besides purchasing some very fine prints and valuable books, he bought a number of expensive toys, a very handsome gold snuff-box for Mrs. Shepherd, a pair of diamond bracelet buckles for Miss; a gold filagreee tooth-pick case for Miss Ellis, and a set of silver dressing boxes for my toilet—in short he layed out near six hundred pounds in what I thought unnecessary things, but I had no right to prevent the disposal of his own money, therefore was silent.

On our return, when our presents were brought home and delivered to us, Miss Shepherd after examining the dressing boxes, exclaimed, “ Lord, how very beautiful these boxes are—well, I hope if ever I marry I shall have the good luck to get a Nabob; you are a fortunate woman Mrs. Menville in exchanging a poor half-pay Captain, with a paltry three hundred
a year,

a year, for a man with twice as many thousands, yet you don't seem half sensible of your happiness; O, if I was in your situation I should grow wild with joy in being mistress of such a house and establishment as you possess." "I should pay Mr. Menville a very ill compliment," I replied, "if those circumstances only gave me joy; I assure you, Miss Shepherd, a splendid establishment alone would never have governed me in my preference—I had other motives, I hope much better ones, and Mr. Menville's fortune was but a secondary consideration with me." "Why, to be sure," said she, "he has provided very handsomely for all your family, that every body knows." "Fie Kitty!" cried the old lady, "how can you be so rude?" "O, Madam!" I returned, with, I believe, rather a contemptuous smile, "'tis impossible Miss Shepherd can intend any rudeness or insult, she is too much my friend not to rejoice at an advantage to me, in which she will so largely partake."

You must know, I suspected Mr. Menville had made her some presents the preceding morning, and my conjectures were confirmed by her behaviour at that moment, — she blushed scarlet deep, threw her eyes on Mr. Menville, and appeared at a loss for a reply; he saw her confusion and cried out in a hasty, gay, tone, "my fortune, ladies, will be always at the command of my wife and her friends." You are very kind, my dear sir," I replied, "neither your wife or *her* friends will ever make any improper demands on your generosity."

"That point being settled," said Miss Ellis, "let us call a new cause, and pray, sir, be so good as to give me a little private history of
our

our beaux that attended us yesterday, perhaps I may think it worth while to set my cap at the most eligible of them." "I am mistaken" answered he, smiling, "if you have not already made a conquest, but as to private history I know nothing—the general character the world gives them is this——Sir William Pritchard is a man of family, and *has had* a very considerable estate, but entering largely into every fashionable amusement, and being particularly unfortunate at Newmarket, where I first became acquainted with him, I believe it is pretty deeply involved and his present finances scarcely sufficient to support a genteel appearance; he has an aunt in town from whom he has great expectancies, which occasions his constant residence in London: he is said to be a man of principle, liberality, and candour—and thus much fair lady for the Baronet. Mr. Martin"——"O!" cried Miss Ellis, "you forgot Mr. Colemore, the Baronet's friend." "If I did," answered he, smiling, "I am pleased to see you did *not*, but to confess the truth, I was malicious and intentionally omitted speaking of him in order"——Miss Ellis blushed, he went on——"Mr. Colemore then is a man of fashion, fortune, and character—he is rather apt to be grave and sentimental—his father was a bishop of respectable character and took great pains to form his son's principles; he was intended for the church, but the death of a distant relation gave him possession of a large and unexpected fortune, he therefore bestowed the living, which had been purchased and held for him, on a deserving, but less fortunate, acquaintance of his, who had a large family. I have not known him long, but the world speaks highly of him; either, I am much
mistaken

mistaken in my conjectures, or I may be honored with his visits more frequently than usual from the attraction of certain objects which engrossed his attention yesterday. As to Mr. Martin and Mr. Thurkill, they are common characters; they have good fortunes and are fashionable men; their being in town now is rather extraordinary, but they are just come from Tunbridge, and I suppose will soon be on the wing for some other time-killing place—*voilà ma chère amie* the history of our visitors, and, as you are pleased to call them, your beaux.

Miss Shepherd made a few sprightly remarks on the Parson being a man of the world, and declared, “she thought from the stiffness and formality of Mr. Colemore he was a Methodist—poor fellow!” said she, “from being educated for a pious life, and now an inhabitant of the gay world, he is unfit for either.” No answer being made, she went on; “the Baronet is a good decent fellow, but Mr. Martin is certainly the smartest of the group.” Mr. Menville and she had a good deal of lively chat, but I could not avoid being surprised a young lady who had been entirely educated in the country should have acquired so much knowledge of the world.

Yesterday we went to Richmond, and a delightful day I should have spent had not that forward girl contrived to engross Mr. Menville so particularly to herself that he forgot even common politeness to Miss Ellis; I see she makes her own observations and is hurt by them, though she has too much delicacy to speak on the subject.

I congratulate you, my dear Mrs. Bertie, on the recovery of your aunt; may you long enjoy that invaluable blessing, a near relation and a true

friend ; I have this moment a letter from my father, and, as I feared, he declines my invitation ; he says, the country is surpris'd and concerned at the confidence Mr. Menville has plac'd in Mr. Shepherd, Doctor Ellis thinks him a very worthless man, and though he sometimes permitted their visits, he never could esteem any part of the family: the sooner therefore their *visit to me* concluded he conceived the better it would be for us all." I shall here conclude this letter and resume my pen in the evening or tomorrow, as I find opportunity.

I am ever sincerely your's,

EMILY MENVILLE.

L E T T E R XII.

CAPTAIN HARLEY TO MISS ELLIS.

A THOUSAND thanks to you, my amiable Miss Ellis, for your obliging letter ; no one event since I quitted England has given me half the pleasure as that of hearing from my good friends at Sudbury: I have been engaged in some very busy scenes since I wrote you last, as unpleasing as unexpected. You may remember I told you I was engaged to dine with a Spanish grandee, who had two handsome daughters. I was punctual to my appointment and had the honor of being introduced to two very lovely women, the eldest, Donna Antonia, was particularly striking, and a susceptible Englishman would have found it difficult to have resisted her charms, had not his heart been pre-occupied

ed by an object far superior. The ladies behaved with the utmost affability, yet a certain air of grandeur; a consciousness of high birth and beauty created that distant respect which prevented any very social intercourse. I was, however, so fortunate as to render myself agreeable to the noble Count and received a general invitation in terms the most flattering, for which doubtless I was indebted to my friend Clayton, whose uncle I believe you know had formerly been ambassador here from our court. On our return to our lodgings at night, we found the house in a good deal of bustle, and on enquiry was told a gentleman had been brought there from an Inn very ill, a young lady with him in great affliction, but whether wife or sister they could not tell, they were English and appeared like people of distinction. We found ourselves much interested for our sick countryman, and hearing there was a man-servant, desired to see him; he came though rather reluctantly and in much confusion: I told him, that being informed an English gentleman was in the house much indisposed, I requested he would make our compliments (telling our names) to his master and the lady, with a tender of our services on any occasion that we could be useful in. It was some time before he returned with his master's "grateful thanks, that he was too ill at present to see company, but if he found himself better the next morning he would be happy to make his personal acknowledgments." No name was mentioned nor any notice taken of the lady, who our hostess told us was very beautiful though evidently oppressed with sorrow. The next day we sent to know how the gentleman had rested, and heard his fever was much

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increased,

increased, and the lady almost distracted; we renewed our offers of service but had only a compliment in return: understanding a physician was with him we waited his coming out, and I took the liberty of addressing him and enquired how he found his patient; he said, "extremely ill, his fever very violent, and evidently in an agitation of mind which impeded the effect of medicine." We were concerned at this unfavorable account, the more so, as we were not permitted to offer any assistance.

We dined out and did not return 'till late in the evening, when my servant told me the lady had been in strong fits, and the sick gentleman had requested to see me; I instantly sent to inform him of my return, and was desired to walk into his apartment; I followed the servant, the physician was in the room, and by a look he gave on entering, I feared there was much danger; the lady was kneeling on one side of the bed, her face muffled, and hid by the clothes—I advanced to the other side, and making some slight apology for the liberty of offering my services, he turned his head and to my infinite surprise discovered the features of Lord Trueby formerly in the same regiment with myself—"Ah, Harley!" cried he, in a faint broken voice, "'tis all over with me, I am dying."—A deep sigh from the lady, who fell senseless to the ground, gave a painful interruption to him—he was in agonies—I flew to assist the lady, and was almost petrified in beholding the beautiful Mrs. B—, the wife of our worthy Colonel! The physician had her conveyed to another room, and I returned to Lord Trueby. "Oh! Harley," said he, grasping my hand, "what a wretch do you see before you! I have
" seduced

seduced an amiable woman, I have irreparably injured a worthy man and destroyed their peace for ever, and now to die, cut off in the height of wickedness, no reparation, no repentance!—Oh! Harley, what will become of me? He stopt with horror in his looks, I could not speak—he fixed his eyes eagerly on me. “You give me no comfort, you cannot flatter me I shall recover, you cannot bid me hope for mercy—Oh, God! what will become of *me*!—what can be done for the dear, unhappy——!” Here his voice failed him, his lips only moved—the physician returned, he said, “the lady was better and had been persuaded to lie down for an hour or two.”—Poor Lord Trueby tried to speak—“save her, protect her,” said he, in an earnest, imploring tone of voice—I prest his hand—“compose yourself, my dear sir, I am *your* friend, I will be *her’s*—I swear to serve her in whatever manner she shall point out to me.” “Then I am satisfied,” said he, feebly.

The Doctor having given him a composing medicine, he seemed to doze, and desiring his servant to call me when he awaked, I retired with the physician who I found was a stranger to their rank or circumstances, and I chose he should remain so. “The gentleman cannot I think recover,” said he, “and the lady, who I suppose is his wife, appears so much exhausted by grief and fatigue that I should not be surprised if his death proved fatal to her: it is a very fortunate circumstance that he should so unexpectedly meet an old acquaintance at Madrid—he appears to be a man of quality, and I am certain is under some particular affliction which has increased the disease to such an alarming degree.”

I answered him, " that the gentleman was a person of fashion and fortune, who I believed was travelling for amusement and had no other cause of uneasiness but the dread of leaving his lady in a foreign country : I requested he would pay him particular attention, and not be long absent ; he promised both ; I left him to seek for Clayton to whom I communicated the preceding scenes that had so greatly surprised and affected me.

The situation of Mrs. E— was truly pitiable, and disarmed that contempt we must otherwise have felt for her character ; for to be sincere, my dear Miss Ellis, there is that ingratitude in the heart of man, that the moment the object of his wishes degrades herself in his opinion, by losing the respect due to *her own* character, he ceases to esteem her, and when novelty wears off, and the beauty which charmed him becomes familiar to his view, how soon does disgust and coldness succeed ! and if that object is *the wife* of another, her broken vows, her ingratitude, a still more odious vice in *your* sex, all conspire to make the man for whose sake she had disgraced herself, despise, and desert her. You see I scruple not to betray the sentiments by which men are in general actuated in their intimacy with your sex ; and however base you may think *those sentiments*, you will have candour enough to acknowledge that mankind would not have half the crimes to answer for if women learned to respect themselves, and to " look presumption out of countenance." But if *we* pitied Mrs. E—'s unhappy situation, what must her seducer feel ? What must be the sufferings of her deserted husband ? I know Colonel B— perfectly, he is some years older than his lady, but

but a pleasing manly figure, strict principles of honor, with an amiable disposition, and the most attentive fondness for his wife might surely overbalance the drawback of a few years: but, I beg your pardon for this digression, and resume my narrative. Before I went to rest, I returned to my Lord's apartment and found he still lay very quiet, also that Mrs. B— was much better and intended passing the remainder of the night in his room, a bed being made up on the floor.

Soon as I awoke in the morning I sent to know how they had rested, and heard with much pleasure Lord Trueby was better and the fever greatly abated; after breakfast I went to visit him; Mrs. B— was sitting by him, her eyes were swelled with weeping, she looked sullen, and on my entrance bowed stiffly to my compliment and hastily left the room. The physician came in immediately after, and was wonderfully surprised at the visible alteration in his patient; he said "the fever was now reduced and within the power of medicine; that he knew the crisis was at hand last night, but little expected it would have taken a favorable turn."

Lord Trueby appeared happy in the hopes that were given him of returning health, and when the Doctor left us, told me, "he believed that to the ease of his mind in the promise I had made respecting Mrs. B—, he was indebted for the favorable change in his disorder; but," said he, "she is mortified and displeased at meeting an old acquaintance, and has her fears lest you should inform her husband where she now is."

"Mrs. E— may make herself perfectly easy on that head, I am no officious man nor do I

conceive it can be of any consequence to Colonel B—now in what part of the globe his wife resides when she has deserted him.”

I saw an alteration in Lord Trueby's countenance and therefore changed the subject, he was too weak to talk much, and after sitting half an hour, recommending rest and quiet, I left him. He grew better daily, I visited him often, but Mrs. B— always quitted the room on my entrance; he was now able to sit up and hoped soon to walk or ride. For a day or two I perceived a gloom on his features, he spoke little, and appeared lost in reflection; I had surprised Mrs. B— in tears once or twice and she passed me with very furious looks. One morning that I called in, he was more grave than usual, I thought he might wish for an opening to communicate something, and therefore I observed he did not appear cheerful, and asked if he had any complaints or return of his disorder. “No,” answered he, sighing, “I have no bodily complaints, but my mind is very much disordered, and I have for some days wished to consult you on the subject that makes me very unhappy: you have had too much delicacy to question me respecting my intimacy with Mrs. B—, but I think it necessary to be open and candid with you, and then you will be enabled to judge fairly what I can or ought to do. You remember, Harley, how much we all admired the Colonel's young and beautiful wife, and thought him too old for so charming a creature. You were always a sentimental fellow, therefore she made no impression on you.”

I always admired her as a beautiful woman, and as a *wife* I *respected* her.”—“Well, well, every one has not your resolution and self-denial;”

resumed

resumed he, " I confess, I was struck with her the first moment of introduction, and you quitting the regiment soon after could not know that I devoted myself to her entirely; yet had she repressed my presumption at first, most probably I should have grown tired of the chase, and respected her as the wife of Colonel B— only; but, without being vain, I must say my attentions were so well received that a mutual inclination took place, and I had no reason to regret the happiness of her husband. Whether we were too unguarded, or whether the Colonel's suspicions were roused by the officious observations of others, I know not, but he began to cool in his attentions to me, and at last requested she would give up her acquaintance with me in terms very peremptory, and as she termed it, insolent. This decided her inclinations in my favor so strongly, that she herself proposed our going off to the continent; I made no objection, and as we conjectured we should easily be traced to France and Italy, besides meeting such multitudes of English, we determined to change our names and reside some time at Madrid. Our plan was soon put in execution, which was to make a worthy man very miserable, and I own to you, her eagerness to forsake a husband who adored her, and the ridiculous light in which she painted his distress on the discovery, first gave me some compunction, and lessened her influence in my heart; I could not esteem one who had forfeited her claim to it, and her beauty was the only tie that held us together on my side.

Two stages from hence, the wheel of the carriage flew off, and unfortunately it poured torrents of rain: Mrs. B—happily received no hurt—I had a violent blow in my head which stunned

me for a moment, but, recovering, I got out of the carriage to assist the servants in replacing the wheel, as the postilion had another linch-pin in the chaise; we succeeded in our endeavours, but I was wet through, and when we arrived at Madrid the pain of my head was so violent, that, added to a dreadful cold, I was that night seized with a fever from which I never expected to recover. Mrs. B—, quite miserable at being in an Inn where the accommodations were so bad, got recommended to this house—with difficulty I was removed to it, and I verily believe the fortunate circumstance of meeting you here greatly promoted my recovery, by making my mind easy; for to leave that unfortunate woman in a strange country, without friends or fortune, was a continual torment to my thoughts, and added to my disorder. Whilst I lay, as I thought, on my death-bed, the injury I had done Colonel B—, to say nothing of ~~two~~ many crimes of the same nature, rose with all its horrors to my view—in that melancholy situation vice appears in all its deformity, and, accompanied with all the terrors of a guilty conscience, the specious names of gallantry and fashion will not avail in that moment to reconcile us to ourselves; I bitterly repented, and determined, if my life was spared, to break off a connection I now looked upon with horror: since my recovery I have held my resolution, and having explained my intention to the unhappy Mrs. B—, 'tis with grief I experience only reproaches and repulse from her to all the plans I have proposed for her benefit. She has taken an unjustifiable hatred to you, under the idea that the plans I have proposed to her have been suggested by you—'tis in vain I have assured her, you have never
been

been consulted — she execrates us both, and I have every thing to dread from the violence of her temper, and the uncertainty in what manner I can separate myself from her so as to make *her* easy, and free my own mind from reproach on that head, though I never can forgive myself for the wretched situation into which my folly has plunged her.”

Lord Trueby being silent, I warmly applauded his present disposition, since to be sensible of our errors, and endeavor, as far as in our power, to atone for them, was surely praise-worthy ; and I entreated him if I could be of any service in his plans not to spare me.

After several consultations on the subject, he executed a deed entitling her to a thousand pounds a year for her life, with half that sum for her immediate use ; he besought me to see her, and try to reconcile her to a separation his own feelings would not permit him to insist upon. 'I was an ungrateful office—she had already conceived a prejudice against me, and my interference would confirm her conjectures, yet I could not refuse him ; I sent a message to Mrs. B— desiring permission to wait on her, which being obtained, I entered her apartment in some confusion at the business I had undertaken ; she bowed stiffly and looked haughtily on me as I saluted her ; I apologized for my intrusion as being requested by Lord Trueby to wait upon her and deliver that letter ; (giving her a packet he had previously prepared) she received it without speaking, but, opening it, I saw her countenance glowed with rage ; scarcely could she have perused it before she tore the deed of settlement in pieces, and, with the utmost violence in her manner, threw them on the floor ; then rising
and

and fixing her eyes on me, in which anger, indignation, and every furious passion were expressed.

“ Since *you*, sir, have taken this officious, this mean business on yourself, return, and tell my Lord Trueby I equally despise him, his paltry offer, and his impertinent agent; humbled as I am, destitute and in a foreign country, I will submit to every inconvenience rather than owe pecuniary obligations to a man who can so poorly, so basely desert me. Go, sir, tell this *man of honor*, this creeping penitent, I scorn and detest him, but let him have a care, for *I will be revenged.*” The menace she pronounced with a look so truly diabolical, and a voice so furious, that, as she quitted the room, I felt an universal tremor. Good Heaven! what a disgusting object is a woman lost to virtue, and given up to the violence of her unruly passions!

Mortified, and uneasy, I returned to my Lord with a resolution to conceal nothing from him; when I repeated the repulse I had met with, he was at first much concerned, but, after pausing some time, “ I am no stranger,” said he, “ to the impetuosity of her disposition, and I know that after her pride and anger is a little subsided ’tis possible she may yet be willing to accept my offers; her love I am sure cannot be wounded though her pride may, by my desire of parting; for I have many reasons to believe I am indebted to her preference of me, more from the gratification of vanity and contempt, and opposition to her husband, than from any real affection; but be that as it may, she shall not upbraid me with leaving her to poverty; the offer shall again be repeated through a different channel—her maid, who is her great favorite
and

and confidante, may perhaps prevail better than either of us ;—" he retired to write a second letter, and I went out in search of my friend Clayton. I had scarcely gone three yards from the house when I saw two persons in the habits of Englishmen approaching towards me, but, good Heavens ! how great was my surprise, when on advancing nearer I discovered the person of Colonel B—, the other was his servant ; he knew me at the same instant, and exclaimed in a voice expressive of equal astonishment and pleasure, " Captain Harley ! what a fortunate encounter is this ! " We shook hands with great cordiality, but, as I too well guessed the business which had brought him to Madrid, there was an embarrassment in my manner which did not escape his observation. " I see, Harley," said he, sighing, " you are no stranger to the villainous treatment I have received—perhaps have seen the persons I am in search of—but can we step into any house, for I long to unburthen my sorrows to some sympathizing bosom, and thank Heaven for this unexpected meeting ? "

I attended him to a house of entertainment, with a sad presentiment of what might be the event of this fatal journey ; when he was seated, I apologized for a moment's absence, and stepping into another room wrote only these words, which I instantly dispatched to Lord Trueby.

Colonel B— is in Madrid, his errand is easily understood—for Heaven's sake quit the place—add not to the injuries you have already done him by risking an interview, which, whatever the consequences may be, must irreparably injure him for ever.

F. H.

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I returned to the Colonel under an agitation of mind not to be described ; he was walking up and down the room with great emotion.——“ O! Harley,” said he, grasping my hand, “ my peace, my happiness are lost for ever ! An ungrateful woman, a false abandoned villain, under the masks of love and friendship, have planted daggers in my bosom.—Tell me, have you seen that cursed Lord Trueby, or my unworthy wife ?—Wife !” repeated he, stamping, “ Blasted be the hour in which I made her such !”

I knew not what to answer—I hesitated, he saw my confusion — “ You *have* seen them—” cried he, “ I see you have—thus far I have traced them.”

“ And to what purpose, my dear Colonel,” said I, interrupted him, “ they are equally unworthy your notice or resentment.”

“ What ! shall I suffer them to triumph in deceiving me ? shall I submit to injury, and be insulted with impunity ?—No, though I despise *her*, I will be revenged on him—life is no longer worth my care—my heart, my honor deeply wounded, I only live to chastise a villain, and care not if I perish the succeeding moment.”

I endeavoured, by every argument I was master of, to combat his violent resolutions ; I strove to inspire him with contempt for her who had so cruelly deserted him, but I found his affection was too deeply rooted, and his eagerness for revenge too predominant in his mind, to be subdued by reason. I then acknowledged I had seen Lord Trueby, and related minutely every circumstance that had taken place : he heard me with a variety of emotions painted in his countenance, and when I paused —— “ Unhappy woman !” said he, sighing, “ how humiliating,
how

how degrading, your situation! What must be *her* feelings when even *I* can pity her! — but for *Trueby*, no penitence can atone his crimes, he can make no reparation for my injuries, and the misery he has brought on a woman, who but for his insidious arts, his pernicious gallantries, might have lived happy and respectable—*him* I never will forgive, nor shall she owe obligations to her destroyer — instantly let me have pen and paper.”

His request was complied with, and whilst he wrote, the big tears strayed down his face and his bosom heaved with sighs: — having finished his task, he requested me to sign it; his servant also was called in as a witness, and when he left the room, the Colonel said, “now *Harley*, I have done my duty—I have not indeed *Lord Trueby’s* estate, for mine does not exceed fifteen hundred a year, but by this deed I put her in possession of one thousand of it for life; from this moment, she shall have no temptation from poverty to continue in vice: if I live, the remainder will more than answer for all my purposes, and at my death I leave no relations to whom my fortune could be any object, since all are amply provided for. If you know her residence let a copy of this be conveyed to her, and let her draw for what sums she pleases for her present support — we must meet no more, but *Lord Trueby* *I will* see.” He scarcely pronounced those last words when the door opened, and the very identical man entered the room — the Colonel started from his chair—involuntarily I caught his arm—*Lord Trueby* in the same instant advancing hastily — “You see before you, sir, a man, who perhaps you think ought to have shrunk
from

from your view—a man who has injured you in the tenderest part; who has no palliation to offer that can soften his offences; no reparation in his power to give, but *one, that only* atonement is his *life*, 'tis in your hands, revenge yourself,—I shall make no resistance."

The Colonel trembled with passion—"Villain as you are," cried he, "conscious of the wrongs you have done me, you seek to deprecate my vengeance by throwing yourself in my power—you well know I am no assassin—I scorn to *take* your life. Little as you deserve the treatment of a man of honor, I owe it to my own character to meet you on fair ground; name your time and place, sir, and see if you dare justify by your sword the infamy you have committed."

"No," replied Lord Trueby, "I *dare not*, there was a time when I might have accepted the terms you offer, but know, sir, I am no longer the same man; the near approach of death has created in me a new soul—the sense I have of the wrongs I have done you, are far more poignant than the point of your sword will be, but never, never, will I raise my arm against the life of one I have so greatly injured: you know I am *no* coward,—'tis from principle, from conviction, I refuse to let you hazard a valuable life against my worthless one."

Never have I beheld such a conflict of contending passions as then agitated the Colonel—he sat down, rose again two or three times without being able to speak one word—I seized the occasion that offered of interfering, and taking his hand, "my dear sir, permit reason and reflection to subdue a just resentment; you behold a man indeed who has destroyed
your

your peace, but you see also a sincere penitent ; —where can be the gratification of cutting off a man who acknowledges, who repents of his sins, and why wish him to add to his crimes by forcing him to the chance of taking *your* life ? In the words of an admired writer “ If God has given him time for repentance, what right have you to deny it him ?

The Colonel sat leaning his head on the table, at length waving his hand, “ Well, sir, leave me, see me no more—at present I submit, but I will not, I cannot answer for myself if we ever meet again.”

“ I obey you, sir,” answered Lord Trueby, “ and be assured my feelings at this moment are such as might satisfy your bitterest wishes of revenge. Far from you, my native country and friends, I shall seek to lose the remembrance of my past follies ; and by abjuring those pernicious maxims of gallantry which have been productive of so much evil, learn in future to respect the peace of others equally with my own.”

He quitted the room, I followed him to the door, “ dear Harley,” said he, “ I shall quit Madrid early to-morrow morning, let me see you for a few moments this evening.”

I promised to attend him, and returned to Colonel B— ; he was walking the room greatly agitated—“ I know not what may be *your* sentiments,” said he, but I am dissatisfied with myself ; I could not draw on a man unarmed, nor condescend to give him a personal insult ; yet, what is his penitence, whether real or affected, to me ?” Will it restore the innocence of my wife ? will it bring back my lost happiness ?

O! no,

O ! no, no, he has irreparably destroyed both, why then should I not compel him to give me satisfaction ?”

“ My dear sir, “ I replied, “ your own words prove *that* is impossible ; to take his life, or lose your own, could not repair your injuries, much less afford *satisfaction*.”

“ O ! Harley,” exclaimed he, “ you know not my feelings—there, where I had treasured up my soul, there, in that only vulnerable part, to be wounded, ’tis not to be borne !”

I remained with him near two hours, I fought for every argument to soften, though I could not subdue his affliction ; at length he appeared more composed, and at his earnest request I promised to wait on Mrs. B— in the morning and bring him the result of my visit, as he determined to keep close ’till matters were settled.

After leaving him, I went in search of Clayton, but not meeting with him returned to my lodgings, where I found him with Lord Trueby. I will not trouble you with a repetition of our conversation, which may be easily guessed—I never saw a man more deeply affected than he appeared to be at the Colonel’s situation, but as he was desirous of being informed what might be the event of my visit to Mrs. B—, he consented to defer his departure for another day.

I past a sleepless night, Colonel B—’s sorrows were strongly reflected on my own bosom ; I knew what it was to be deprived of the dearest object of my wishes, and had the additional misery of having my admiration increased by the very cause which destroyed my peace. Time, and a sense of the indiscretion of Mrs. B—, might heal the wounds *he had* received,

received, but time could do nothing for me, when every moment's reflection convinced me I had lost a treasure scarcely to be equalled.

In the morning I prepared to attend Mrs. B—, on sending up my name I was admitted ; I found her pale and dejected, her dress in disorder, and every mark of an agitated mind ; she bowed on my entrance, and coolly desired I would be seated ; before I had power to speak she thus addressed me.

“ I have permitted this visit, sir, to save you and Lord Trueby future trouble, and myself fruitless importunity ; my resolution is fixed, since he can desert and give me up for ever in a strange country, I will owe no obligations to so ungrateful a man : I have near four hundred pounds in my possession, a sum sufficient for my present purpose, therefore once for all, tell him I refuse all pecuniary offers, and from this moment will hear of him no more.”

I was for a moment silent, deliberating in what manner to open my embassy from her husband ; at length, “ I come not, Madam, from Lord Trueby, but from one who is sensible you have a right to his fortune, and has too much pride to permit you should owe obligations to another.” I stopt, she started ; with terror in her looks, she exclaimed, *a right* to his fortune ? Gracious Heaven ! what is it you mean ?” I presented the letter, she snatched it eagerly, looked at the address, cried, “ Oh ! my God !” and tearing it open, scarcely read three lines before, with a deep sigh, she fell senseless from her chair. I rung for assistance, and endeavoured to support her ; her woman entered, and looking angrily at me, “ what, sir, have you killed my lady ?” I besought her help, telling her

her it was only a fainting fit, and the lady beginning to recover, she forebore any farther marks of her resentment for the present : when Mrs. B— was seated on the sofa, she ordered Miller to retire, and trying to collect resolution, she perused the whole letter. After pausing some time, she said “ you are then a friend of Colonel B—s, *that* circumstance accounts for your officious interference between Lord Trueby and myself; hear me out, sir, I condemn you not, the event will prove how far you have done right. Tell Colonel B—I will consider the contents of this letter, and to-morrow morning he shall have my final resolution; as his friend, I recommend him to your care—he deserved a better wife—teach him to forget my memory, and be happy. After this time I can see you no more, but I forgive and wish you well.”

She arose, and with feeble steps left the room. I felt the sincerest compassion for *her* and my two friends, to whom I hastened, and to each reported her present situation; the Colonel was deeply affected, but after I had reasoned him into some degree of composure, I returned to Lord Trueby: he waited for me with impatience, but when I acquainted him with the contents of Colonel B—’s letter, and the effect it had upon her, I never saw a man more completely miserable—one moment he was for flying to her and to convey her away far from all that knew them; then he execrated himself for the crimes he had already committed; in short, I found it a very difficult task though aided by my friend Clayton, to bring him out of a degree of frenzy which might have caused a fatal event if left to himself—little could I foresee the dreadful consequences which ensued!

ensued! Clayton remained with him, whilst I thought it an act of humanity to spend some hours with the Colonel—great were his agitations, and I left him half resolved to pardon his unhappy lady and receive her once more to his heart.

I rested, but very ill, my anxiety for the conclusion of this business was little short of what the parties concerned must feel: I went early to the Colonel's, he was under the most painful agitations; in less than an hour after I came in, a man brought a letter, the Colonel opened it with a trembling hand, and in a moment cried out "she is dead, she is dead!" and fell back in his chair, neither alive nor senseless, but gasping for breath, and his eyes fixed; with the help of the landlord and some drops he recovered his speech—starting up, "let us fly to prevent this poor unhappy——" he could say no more, but run out of the house, I followed him—we were quickly at the house where the unfortunate Mrs. B— had removed to on the recovery of Lord Trueby; *there* all was confusion, and the sad tale was abruptly told us—the lady had just put an end to her life by cutting her throat! The Colonel fell senseless at my feet; he was carried into a room, which we had no sooner entered; than, before I could make a single enquiry, Mrs. B—'s maid burst into the room;—"my lady is dead," said she, wildly, "you have killed her amongst you, —you shall all be hanged—you have murdered my mistress!"

I entreated the mistress of the house to take care of the poor girl, whilst my attention was directed to my still senseless friend; I learnt, however, that the poor lady was actually dead
almost

almost instantly that she perpetrated the fatal deed.

It was some time before the Colonel returned to life and misery—when he could speak, “tell me, dear Harley, have I been in a frightful dream, or is the horrid story true?”

I would have spoke, but my emotions precluded speech; “you are silent, you tremble—all then is over! My rash pursuit has caused her death—what then must become of me?” He grew very faint—a bed was prepared and I had him conveyed to it—a surgeon, who had been sent for, breathed a vein, and I left him under the care of his own servant and one of the house.

I was requested by the landlord to go into the lady's room and seal up her effects—the scene I saw there I never can forget, and cannot be described; on the table were three letters, one to Colonel B. one for myself, and the third for a friend of her's in London. After sealing up the effects, I retired to another room and opened the letter addressed to me; it contained only three lines, recommending the Colonel and Lord Trueby to my care, as their common friend, and trusting that the sad scene before me would be a lesson for life, to guard me from a commission of such crimes, as, sooner or later, brought their heavy punishment along with them. I was most deeply affected, I pitied the unfortunate victim of her own folly, I dreaded the consequences of this event to my friends, I knew not how to act with respect to the body: in this dilemma it occurred to me to consult the noble Count I mentioned to you at the beginning of this letter: having sent off a line to Clayton to be careful of my Lord, I instantly waited

waited on the Count ; he was equally surprised and affected at my story, but with great goodness assured me he would send a proper woman and other persons to attend the body, and insisted upon sending a litter for the Colonel, and to have him lodged under his own care. I felt the warmest gratitude for this unexpected kindness, and frankly accepted his offers ; within three hours the Colonel was lodged in his palace, but so entirely unconscious of any thing, that he was taken from his bed, placed in the litter, and comfortably settled in a bed at the Count's, without speaking or moving. Inow returned with an agitated heart to Lord Trueby, undetermined what tale to tell ; but I was spared the painful relation, for he, anxious to know the result of my visit, had sent a servant to the Colonel's lodgings to enquire for me previous to Clayton's receiving my note ; the servant passed the house where those dreadful scenes happened, and being informed of the affair, without considering a moment, imprudently ran back and abruptly informed Lord Trueby of what he had been told. The consequences may be easily guessed, and on my arrival I found Lord Trueby in bed, raving like a mad man and just let blood ; he knew me not, and the physician having prescribed, I gladly withdrew to my own apartment to recover from the fatigues of mind and body I had endured within the last six hours.

Retrospections were useless, yet I deeply regretted it had been my ill-fortune to meet the parties in this fatal business, and reflected with horror on the dreadful effects which attended an intrigue too much sanctioned by fashion and gallantry, and a breach of the marriage vow so often violated with impunity. I tried to rest, but
in

in vain; busy fancy retraced the scenes I had been a painful witness of, and I was compelled to give up all thoughts of repose. I returned to Lord Trueby's room, he was now silent, but appeared to have neither reason nor recollection; I left him to the care of Clayton, and repaired to the Count's: the Colonel had shewn some signs of returning sense by several heavy sighs; I went to the bed-side and spoke to him, he looked at me for several moments very earnestly; "do you not know me, my dear Colonel?" "Yes," said he, with much difficulty, "yes, 'tis Harley."

I was rejoiced that he knew me, I sat by him and administered his medicines, he spoke a word or two several times—the physician came in—he felt his pulse—the poor man put his hand on his breast, "here, here," repeated he, "*all is here.*"

The oppression indeed was very visible—I followed the Doctor to the door. "I fear the case is hopeless," said he. I returned to my seat—towards the evening he spoke with less difficulty.

"Harley, I wish for a Notary, send for one—where am I?" looking round the very elegant apartment, I informed him of the noble Count's humanity; he wished to see him—the Count obligingly came in—he tried to express his thanks but was silenced—again expressing his wish for a Notary, the Count ordered his own to be sent for; he soon came—the Colonel strove to exert himself—in a few words he conveyed to me and my heirs for ever, that deed of a thousand pounds a year intended for the late unfortunate Mrs. B—, being two estates in Worcestershire: the residue of his effects, after paying his debts and all expences whatever, he bequeathed

bequeathed to a young woman he had been god-father to, whose parents were worthy and unfortunate, and to whom an income of near five hundred a year must be a welcome acquisition. I will not fatigue you with painful repetitions; during the night he had many changes; about seven in the morning the oppression on his breast increased, and within a few minutes of ten he breathed his last sigh!

The agitation of my mind for the last two days, the mournful scenes I had been witness to, with this last event, entirely overcame me, and I was obliged to be conveyed to bed, where after some time exhausted nature procured me a few hours rest, and I awoke by two o'clock much refreshed.

I waited on the Count and took his advice respecting the conveyance of the bodies to England, it being the Colonel's request they should lay in one grave. The letter addressed to the Colonel from his unhappy wife now fell into my hands, and was as follows.

MRS. B. TO COLONEL B.

"Before this reaches your hands I can offend no more—I have endeavoured to stifle my own feelings and support a life of infamy, but a sense of shame, of ingratitude, to be pointed at by the finger of scorn, to owe my very existence to the man I have so greatly injured, is not to be borne; I die therefore not so much oppressed with a sense of guilt, as a sense of shame, and a spirit too proud to submit to contempt, or obligations of which I am unworthy. Bred up in fashionable dissipations, before I became your wife I ceased to be virtuous, and when

I consented to marry you, it was because I found my reputation was in danger, and because I hoped, under the sanction of your name, to indulge my passions and escape from detection: but a real passion for Lord Trueby made you hateful in my eyes, and I solicited him to fly with me—the consequence you know. Good and worthy as you are, I hardly dare hope for pity, much less forgiveness, for I deserve it not, but if there can be any extenuation urged for crimes like mine, I may say, that to the imprudent education I received, to the scenes of vanity, dissipation, and extravagances I was hourly a witness of, and permitted to share in, to these I owe my ruin, and you the loss of happiness. Adieu for ever, despise my memory, recover your tranquillity, and may the remainder of your days be happy.”

MARIA B.

This letter needs no comment, but may serve as a sad lesson to thoughtless parents and dissipated young women.

The remains of the unfortunate Colonel, and the unhappy victim to her follies, were sent to England, and this long and mournful detail of their fate will be conveyed to you through the hands of the poor girl who follows her mistress's corps to London.

Lord Trueby has settled an annuity of fifty pounds a year on her for life. I have the consolation to say, his health amends daily, but the most profound sadness overwhelms him, and he will, I fear, be wretched for life; soon as he is able to travel, he talks of going to Turkey and Egypt for three or four years.

And

And now, my amiable friend, I shall close this enormous packet, and only trouble you with my best respects to your family, and, beseeching you to give me every information respecting the happiness of one in whose fate mine is closely linked,

Believe me

your obliged

and grateful friend

FREDERIC HARLEY.

L E T T E R XIV.

MRS. MENVILLE TO MRS. BERTIE.

Tuesday Morn. October, 24.

IN my last letter to you, my dear Mrs. Bertie, I mentioned the contents of my father's, the conclusion of which I own accorded with my own sentiments; but alas! I have no voice in the business, and there is every degree of probability my visitors will stay the winter. The bare civility, the cool politeness, with which I am treated is painful enough, yet, as I neither esteem or like them, I should not be much chagrined, but, my dear friend, I am considered as a mere cypher, even by Mr. Menville, so lately the passionate lover and tender husband. When I consider that love could be his only inducement to make me his wife; when I reflect on the ardour with which he sought my hand a few months since; when, on a retrospection of my own conduct, I cannot charge myself with one look, word, or deed, that can have caused a

change so visible in his behaviour, to what must I attribute an alteration so painful to my feelings, but to the baneful influence others have obtained to my prejudice? Yet, to you only I dare confess what I would fain hide even from myself, to Miss Ellis I affect to appear contented, cheerful, and happy; she views me with solicitude and tenderness on some occasions, which I endeavour to avoid being sensible of—yet the world esteems me fortunate and happy! I will make it the business of my life to *deserve* being so, and leave the rest to Providence.

The town begins to fill, I am told, though early in the season; amusements daily increase, and Mrs. and Miss Shepherd are perpetually engaged, with Mr. Menville for their protector. My *situation*, which cannot be concealed, is an excuse for declining invitations to accompany them, which evidently does not disappoint or chagrin either party; but I will have done with this subject, and tell you how greatly I was surprised the other day by discovering accidentally, Captain Harley corresponds with Miss Ellis; she is too delicate to mention his name, and it was only that by searching among some papers for a piece of poetry she had commended, two or three letters fell to the ground; I hastily stooped for them and plainly saw his well-remembered hand in an address to her—few things could make me so happy as to believe there is more than a friendly correspondence between them: I should rejoice to see them united and happy in each other—as she never acquainted me with the circumstance, I took no notice of my observation, and shall wait *her* time for the discovery of their mutual regard.

Thursday

Thursday Morn.

I broke off hastily on Tuesday from the abrupt entrance of Mrs. Shepherd into my dressing room, with a letter in her hand—fury and vexation in her looks; “Lord, Mrs. Menville, was ever any thing so unlucky! here Mr. Shepherd is very ill of the gout, makes a great fuss, and Benson writes, raves for me, and insists upon my coming down—to be a nurse indeed!—*now*, just as London begins to be tolerable; but I won’t go, I am resolved.”

“I thought, Madam,” said I very coolly, “you only *intended* staying six weeks, and therefore I suppose Mr. Shepherd concluded you were ready to return.”

“You are vastly polite,” returned she, colouring, “to remind me of any such thing, but if I have staid longer it was to oblige my girl and Mr. Menville, I assure you Madam, and I don’t know that I shall go now.—She flounced out of the room, and I felt displeased at my momentary petulance, and trying to reconcile myself to her determination with indifference, I went into Miss Ellis’s dressing room; she was weeping over a packet of letters which lay before her—on my entrance, she hastily put the sheet she was reading of into her pocket, and locked the rest into a drawer: I apologized for my intrusion, and she resuming a cheerful look, said she thanked me for interrupting her melancholy employment, and chatted on trifling matters ’till the dinner bell rung. On our entering the dining parlour, I thought Mr. Menville and Miss Shepherd looked more happy than usual, whilst a haughty gloom pervaded the features of the mother.

"You know, I suppose, Mrs. Menville, that my mother is obliged to leave us," said the young lady. "I am sorry, Madam, that Mr. Shepherd's *illness* should occasion it;" I replied.

"I see no such occasion—" cried Mrs. Shepherd, what signifies having the gout—he is used to it, isn't he? *I* can't drive it away." "True, Madam," answered Mr. Menville, but *your* care and tenderness may the sooner restore him."

"Well, *if* I do go," said she, spitefully, my daughter shall go too, so Miss get ready the day after to-morrow. I will see one play more before I go."

This speech was very ill received; Miss "thought her presence could not be of any use to her papa." The old lady said, "one was as much wanted as t'other,—and if one went, both must."—A dead silence prevailed all through the dinner hour, except now and then broken by Miss Ellis, and the little attentions I was compelled to pay at my own table. In the evening I was desired by Mr. Menville to accompany the ladies, a favor not often requested of me—I readily complied, but the dissatisfaction of their minds precluded amusement, and we returned to supper, with evident ill-humour on the part of the ladies, though with the addition to our party of Mr. Martin and Mr. Colemore who joined us, and were invited by Mr. Menville to accompany us home. The gentlemen were in high spirits, particularly Mr. Martin, who was very pointed in his attentions to me, merely I believe because I appeared to be neglected by others. They stayed late—Mrs. Shepherd men-
tioned

tioned, with some indignation, "that she was obliged to leave town next day but one with her daughter."

"How!" cried Mr. Martin, "rob us of Miss Shepherd? Surely, Madam, you cannot have formed a design so cruel?" "Indeed, but I have—" said she, "if I go, *she* must."—"And where is the necessity for either's going?" asked he. "Why, Mr. Shepherd has the gout, and wants to be nursed, I think."

"It's time enough to talk of this to-morrow," said Mr. Menville, "I hate to talk of parting between friends."

The conversation took a more general turn, though I observed an attention and respect in Mr. Coleman's behaviour to Miss Ellis, which pleased me, as I was inclined to think very favorably of him; but from the disorder I found her in when in her dressing-room, I am inclined to think her heart is ill at ease; however this is only conjecture, and I may be mistaken.

When we retired to rest, after some little roundabouts, Mr. Menville said, "I think, my dear, as Miss Shepherd is so very unwilling to quit London, you had better persuade the mother to leave the poor girl behind for a few weeks, to partake with you in the amusements of the town after Christmas."

"If it is your desire, my dear Mr. Menville, I shall certainly speak to Mrs. Shepherd on the subject; but don't you think *your* interest stronger there than mine?"

"No," replied he, with quickness, "'tis necessary the invitation should come from you, unless, indeed——" He stopt, with an air of displeasure; I answered as hastily, "very well,

my dear, I shall certainly employ my eloquence to retain the fair lady." I spoke smilingly, and he appeared very well satisfied — the subject dropt, and I determined to execute my commission faithfully, though I own repugnant to my wishes. The next morning I attended the ladies dressing-room, and sacrificed truth to politeness and the wishes of my husband : Miss eagerly seconded my request, and our joint petitions were at last favourably heard and acceded to, with a declaration of Mrs. Shepherd's, " that within a month, if her father got well, she would return and take her daughter down." — There was no objection made to this, and I received the thanks of both ladies for my civilities.

When Mr. Menville was informed of the success of my negotiation, he thanked Mrs. Shepherd for *obliging Mrs. Menville*, and permitting Miss to remain at *her* request."

Thus, I am the person obliged, you see ! In the evening we were at the play — Mr. Colemore and Mr. Martin of our party ; the latter was extremely troublesome to me by his attentions which I could not avoid, for my husband confined his entirely to Miss Shepherd, and Mr. Colemore appeared very desirous of devoting himself to Miss Ellis. Towards the end of the play, a gentleman entered the box to whom Mr. Martin paid great respect, and informed me, in a whisper, it was the Earl of Longfield ; he seemed to take a particular survey of the whole party, slightly returned a bow from Mr. Menville, and coolly replied to some trifling chat of Martin's : — he staid, however, till the entertainment was over, and made way for me to pass, with respect and politeness. I never saw a countenance so expressive,

or

or greater elegance of manners than appeared in this nobleman: he did not look very young nor in high health, but there was something interesting which engaged you to view him with complacency and respect.

After we returned home, Mr. Martin said, "I see Lord Longfield is recovering his health and spirits again—he does not intend *mourning unto death* for the loss of his lady.

"Is he then a widower?" I asked. — "Yes," replied he, "and a wonderful example of conjugal fidelity—quite a jewel of a husband—always dangling by the side of his deary; and when she died, about a year and half since, all the town expected he would follow her — Such grief! such melancholy! He remained in the country, gave himself up to sorrow, and for many months barely existed—his friends have at length roused him from the apathy he was fallen into and dragged him to town, but so altered from the handsome Longfield that was once so captivating, that he looks forty instead of eight and twenty."

"What an amiable character have you drawn—" exclaimed Miss Ellis, "how few men now a-days deserve such an eulogium!"

"Lord!" said Miss Shepherd, "he must be a poor spiritless creature, or full of affectation—I don't believe any man in the world would mourn six months for a wife."

"Such examples are not common, indeed," replied Mr. Colemore, "but I fear the ladies are in a great degree answerable for the little respect paid to their memory."

"How so?" interrupted Miss Shepherd. — "Pardon me, Madam," answered he, smiling, "truth is not always pleasing to a ladies ear."

O!

“ O! I will have it, said she. “ If you *command* my opinion” he replied, “ I must obey you, and I expect to meet your contempt and displeasure when I confess, that I have been a pretty minute observer of your sex, and of married pairs, among my acquaintance, and have met with but very few instances where the ladies, after marriage, think it worth their while to cultivate the esteem of their husbands, or preserve their affection. We have lately adopted the follies of our gay neighbours without copying their virtues.—The ladies marry to increase their consequence — launch into a vortex of dissipation—dress for every man but their husbands ;—reserve their smiles, wit, and good humour for company alone. — Whilst at home, they are flatteringly in their dress and appearance, careless of a desire to please, given up to ennui, anxious to be abroad, dissatisfied at home, prefer every coxcomb to the man who has a claim to their preference, and in a very short time render him the object of pity or contempt.”

“ Upon my word, Mr. Colemore,” said Miss Ellis, “ if you have such a despicable opinion of our sex you ought *never* to marry.”

“ I *never* will, Madam,” he replied, until I am well assured the lady I address has very opposite qualities to such as I have described.”

“ But how can you depend on appearances, since you charge the ladies with an entire alteration in their conduct *after* marriage? asked she—I beg your pardon, I meant not to censure indiscriminately, there are hundreds, I hope, thousands, truly estimable women ; and a man who permits his judgment to guide him in the choice of a wife, can seldom be deceived.

ceived. A young woman, who is a good daughter, a sincere friend, an admirer of real merit, who is cheerful without levity, agreeable without affectation, and sensible without vanity; such a woman must be amiable from principle; she can never fall into those contemptible follies which disgrace her sex, and destroy the happiness of all her connexions.

"Quite a paragon! upon my word, cry'd Miss Shepherd, tossing her head disdainfully, why it was a thousand pities you had not continued in the profession you were educated for; as a clergyman, you might have declaimed from the pulpit against all the fashions of the age, and doubtless have turned the current of folly into the gentle stream of insipidity and dulness."

"No, madam," he replied, "I never should have entertained so wild an idea, as to hope any efforts of mine could have engaged the attention of a fine lady; the best orators, the noblest precepts, are now treated with contempt; and people in general avoid hearing disagreeable truths; or, if they should sometimes be unfashionable enough to go to church, their behaviour plainly evinces, they think the preacher insufferably tedious, and after seeing, who and who are together, of their gay acquaintance, they feel every minute an age, till the service is ended, that they may meet and form their several parties for the ensuing evening."

"Faith, Colemore!" cry'd Mr. Menville, "you would have made an excellent Puritan, and as you have more than a tolerable person, you would have been the admiration of all the old dowagers, and antiquated virgins."

"Perhaps,"

"Perhaps," said Mr. Colemore, smiling, "I had too much vanity to be satisfied with such a partial distinction, I am an admirer of every charming woman who has a claim to my esteem, and do not despair of being one day distinguished by the preference of an amiable *young* woman of an ingenious heart, capable of doing justice to the sincerity of mine."

"Oh! for heaven's sake," cried Miss Shepherd, "no more of this dull stuff; why you are a mere automaton, without the least animation; none but Miss Ellis is qualified for conversation like your's."

"I thank you, madam, for the compliment," said Miss Ellis, "for I assure you, I think it a very high one."

"And I, madam," added Colemore, "cannot wish for many gratifications superior to what I should feel in being heard favourably by that lady."

"Bravo, bravo!" said Mr. Martin, "but I think the conversation is rather too confined at present, so if you please, we will call a gayer subject, and apropos, did you see in the opposite box this evening, the beautiful lady M —, and her happy favorite? egad, she looked like a divinity; the fashionable world have a thousand obligations to Lord M —, for transplanting the lovely flower from the field to his garden where every one scents the sweets which might else have been lost in the desert air."

"You are quite poetical, Mr. Martin, said Miss Shepherd, "but pray, who is, or rather, who was, this beauteous flower?"

"A curate's daughter," he replied, "who, poor man, burthened with a numerous family, placed

placed three of his girls abroad, to provide for themselves; they were devilish handsome, and one being resident near a university, soon caught the attention of a young fellow of fashion and fortune. The girl being prudent, or cunning, for they are synonymous terms in some cases, the lover was caught in the snare, and married her. Another sister went to Lisbon with a lady, and found a husband in a capital merchant there. The youngest, which is the lady in question, was the most lively, and by far the handsomest; she came on a visit to her sister in town, and one night at Ranelagh, threw her bright eyes on Lord M——, who received such a mortal wound that he joined the party, sought an intimacy with the family, and in less than two months the parson's lovely daughter became a peeress."

"I rejoice in her good fortune," said Miss Ellis, "and have no doubt but she will deserve the distinction she is raised to."

"Why, as to that," replied Martin, with a sneer, "she does credit to his taste, and graces his table, and that is all an old fellow who marries a young lively girl, can expect; she is wonderfully admired, but among the many candidates for her favour, Captain Bingley appears to be selected as the happy man."

"I hope," said Miss Ellis, "for the honour of the sex, that *her* husband will be the only happy man distinguished by her favour."

"Ha, ha, ha!" cried Martin laughing, "what antediluvian ideas! why, my dear madam, nothing is so great a bore, as for a married woman to favour her husband; a man of the ton would be ashamed to appear in the circles of fashion, if his deary was considered as a fond wife; or he was supposed to care six-pence for
her

her. There was poor Lord Longfield, so much the jest of all his acquaintance, for his ridiculous attachment to his wife, that they were compelled to withdraw themselves from the world, and bill and coo in the country."

"I should suppose, sir, said I, very gravely, "you cannot mean to recommend yourself to the young ladies, by uttering such free sentiments, and I am sure, married ones who have any principles, must hold them in abhorrence."

"O Lord! madam," cried he, unabashed, "you are a stranger to the fashionable world at present; by and bye, when you enlarge your circle of acquaintance, you will find I speak the sentiments of the multitude."

"Then I shall confine my conversation to a very narrow circle, I can assure you, answered I, with a look of contempt."

"You have no occasion, madam, to form a resolution which would be a loss to society," said Mr. Colemore, "I will venture to say, no man of sense will presume, in *your* company, to make use of any language, that can offend your delicacy."

I bowed to Mr. Colemore; at the same instant Miss Shepherd exclaimed, "Lord bless me, I am half dead with the vapours, let us have no more preachments—Mr. Menville, are you asleep?"

"Why, indeed," answered he, "this feeble conversation is enough to set one yawning, but happily, here comes the summons to supper, which is an agreeable interruption."

I have repeated this idle chat, merely to give you an insight into the different characters of the two gentlemen, and I feel an increased disgust every moment against Martin, who nevertheless

theless appears a violent favourite with Mr. Menville and Miss Shepherd; whilst the worthy Colemore is treated with common civility only. Mrs. Shepherd sets off to-morrow morning; you will say she has been in no haste to obey the summons of a sick husband; indeed, she does not attempt to disguise the reluctance with which she leaves town, and as the daughter remains behind, her departure is to me a matter of perfect indifference.

I intended, you remember, to write journal-wise, but some days I have not a moment to myself; for whenever the ladies are at home, they are perpetually breaking in on me without ceremony; and when accompanied by Mr. Menville, they take their amusements abroad. Miss Ellis and myself mutually rejoice in enjoying a tête-à-tête; therefore I cannot be as exact as I could wish. I am interrupted, and must attend Mrs. Shepherd—what a tax is politeness upon an ingenuous mind, when obliged to disguise its feelings! Adieu my dear Mrs. Bertie for the present,

Your affectionate

EMILY MENVILLE.

L E T T E R XV.

ROBERT MARTIN, ESQ. TO JOHN CHAMBERS,
ESQ.

F A I T H, Jack, you are right, my neglect of you is owing to an attachment of the tender kind; these devilish women engross all my time, occupy all my thoughts; and now I have such a charmer in pursuit, as I fear will call forth all my

my patience, perseverance and artifice, to lure her to my arms. I was violently in love with Lady M—— two months ago, but she has made a selection ; for the present, therefore, I suspend my operations in that quarter, and devote myself to the fair wife of Mr. Menville ; and although she is not quite so beautiful as the former, she is more captivating, with very little knowledge of the world, and is really and truly, I believe, a woman of principle. To warm a heart like her's, would be triumph indeed. I have ventured a few free observations, which were so ill received, that I shall change my batteries, become the humble sighing swain, and as sentimental as herself. Here is a pretty lively girl on a visit to the family, that an honest fellow might gain without much trouble, for she is vain, volatile, and loves a little romping to her heart ; but I think there is likely to be a good understanding between Menville and her, and I shall not interrupt the affair, as it may answer my purpose on the lovely wife : yet I have two great obstacles in my way, which are, *her* prudery, and the keen observant eye of a country parson's daughter, also on a visit ; I wish she was safe home, reading homilies, or churning butter in the dairy ; then, that canting puritanical fellow, Colemore, who, you must remember at college, is for ever crossing me here, and I suspect is fond of the good Miss Ellis, like to like you know. Thus you see what mountains I have to climb, before I can enjoy the sweets of the delicious valley I have in view ; but a fellow of spirit likes difficulties, for in the pursuit oftentimes lies the chief pleasure of the chase ; and when *once overtaken*, we generally care as little for the woman as for the game.

You

You see now, Chambers, I have a world of business on my hands and cannot at all times find leisure to answer your demands on my pen; write therefore without ceremony, and for my letters, they shall be forth-coming whenever I have opportunity.

“How stands your affairs? are they likely to get settled, that you may return to England?” faith, Jack, you got into a cursed set, and was well pigeoned. I love women better than dice, and if I am sometimes fleeced, the dear creatures are welcome to share the plunder. Farewell, write soon.

ROBERT MARTIN.

L E T T E R XVI.

MRS. BERTIE TO MRS. MENVILLE.

Bath. Nov. 4th.

YOUR letter, my dear friend, which I have so long and so impatiently expected, I am sorry to say, has given me much pain. You are new to the world, you have not, like me, purchased a knowledge of it by painful experience, and from the rectitude of your own heart, ill qualified to judge of the duplicity of others. I wish not to alarm you, yet I cannot be silent on the communications I have received: I am confirmed in my conjectures, that Miss Shepherd is a worthless girl, and a dangerous inmate. Such is the depravity of men, that they will “leave an angel to prey on garbage,” from the natural inconstancy of their disposition; that girl envies and hates you; you have superior beauty; you have virtues she cannot copy; you enjoy a splendid

splendid establishment, which she longs for, to gratify her vanity and taste for expence ; thus every way you are her rival, and I fear her artifices will occasion some confusion, if not distress, in your house. Yet 'tis impossible Mr. Menville can permit her to insult you ; and I am very sure, neither the softness of your disposition, nor your prudence, will deserve to meet any ill treatment. Your situation is so delicate, that I dare not presume to advise you relative to Miss Shepherd ; but I will speak frankly my sentiments of your male friends. That Martin, my dear Mrs. Menville, is a profligate of the most dangerous kind ; I have heard his character, accidentally, from Sir Charles Wentworth, and shall relate the incident that gave rise to it.

Attending my aunt one morning to the pump-room, I observed a very decent looking man, with a young woman leaning on his arm, whose death-like countenance, and emaciated figure, plainly evinced she was far gone in a decline ; there were the remains of a lovely face, but grief and sorrow was deeply imprinted on her pallied cheeks. I felt myself interested for her, and seating myself by her side, I said, “ I hoped she would find relief from the waters ; “ that, madam, replied she, bowing, is what I do not expect, nor am I solicitous for, I came here to oblige my dear father, and am sorry, only on his account, that my disorder is so rooted, and makes such rapid strides, as I think gives not the smallest chance of my recovery.”

“ Do not say so, my dear Mary,” cried the father, earnestly, “ only resolve to be well,

to struggle against your disorder, and you will get the better of it, the doctor says so."

Just at this moment, Sir Charles Wentworth entered the room, and advancing to pay his compliments to us, the young woman caught his eye.

"How d'ye do, Miss Smith?" said he, in a voice of compassion; I hope you are better than when I saw you in town?"

"You are very obliging, Sir," she replied. "I believe I am much the same. Then rising and politely taking leave,—“Come, my dear father, I can walk now.” And with feeble steps, holding the arm of her sorrowful parent, she left the room.

"Poor girl!" said Sir Charles, with a sigh, "I believe, indeed, your case is hopeless."

"Pray," cried I, eagerly, "who is she? There is something very interesting about her."

"She is," replied he, "a very worthy young woman, consigned to the grave by a distemper not mentioned in the bills of mortality, a broken heart. Her father, who was with her, is a very eminent hosier. I have dealt with him for some years past, and greatly respected him. About a year and a half ago I frequently met at his house a Mr. Martin, a young man of fortune and gallantry, pretty notorious. Mr. Smith, with great exultation, in confidence, told me that he paid his addresses to his daughter Mary, and he believed the match would soon take place. Knowing Mr. Martin only by his general character, I did not think myself authorized to give any opinion on this information.

"Miss Smith was a lovely girl, modest, sensible, and gentle in her manners. There was a probability Mr. Martin might be serious in
his

his addressee. Her fortune, I supposed, would not be despicable, although there were three other children. I therefore contented myself with only observing, that Mr. Martin was a young man of good fortune, lived much in the gay world, and I hoped would behave with honor and propriety to Miss Mary.

“ Soon after I left town on a tour to Paris, where I stayed some months. On my return to England, about four months ago, I called on Mr. Smith: he was much altered. I asked him if he had been ill. The worthy man was deeply affected. With a faltering voice he requested me to walk into the parlour: and then, the tears running down his cheeks,

“ Ah, Sir Charles,” said he, “ I am a miserable man: I have lost my wife; my poor Mary is, I fear, following her poor mother: and all this misery is brought upon me by a villain, by that Martin, that profligate seducer, who has deserted my child.”

“ Good God!” I cried, interrupting him, “ sure he has not used Miss Mary ill?”

“ If to gain her heart,” he replied; “ if to insinuate himself into the affections of the poor girl; if to obtain the confidence of her mother and myself; and then, because she would not comply with his infamous desires, to desert her, to abuse me, and laugh at our poor low mechanic notions, to ridicule my poor child for her prudery and her assurance, to suppose he ever intended to connect himself with a trader;—if such treatment, Sir Charles, cannot be called ill-usage I know not what the word means. My child fell into fits before the cruel wretch’s face, who left the house with a sneer, saying, he had seen that farce played too often for it to have any effect

effect upon him. She was carried to bed in a burning fever, and for three weeks was deprived of her senses. Her mother never left her, night nor day; and, by the time the poor girl was unexpectedly restored to her reason, the fatigue and anxiety she had suffered overpowered a naturally-weak constitution: she was obliged to take to *her* bed, and died in less than a fortnight.

“ This heavy stroke, Sir Charles, had nearly proved fatal to us both. I recovered; but my unhappy child was unable to bear the load of misery which preyed upon her mind. She has all the marks of a rapid decline. The physician says, if her mind could be made easy, she might recover: but I fear that never will be the case. She is now in the country, to try the change of air; but, my dear Sir,” said he, wringing my hand, “ I have no hopes. All this misery is brought upon me by a man of fashion and gallantry. Cursed be the tenets of such pests of society, such barbarous assassins, who endeavour to destroy both soul and body, and send innocent victims to the grave.”

“ The poor man burst into tears. I was greatly affected by his sorrow, which was too justly founded to be removed by any arguments. I called upon him about a month after: I saw the unfortunate girl, and was inexpressibly shocked at the ravages which grief had made on her person. I said every thing in my power to awaken her reason, and consider her father. Her answer I shall never forget.

“ Do you think me insensible, Sir Charles?” said she. “ Had I been so, this poor frame might have borne the cruel deceit, the insult of a man of *fashion*, who thought it was sufficient

cient honour for a tradesman's daughter to be his mistress. Alas! *my* heart was but too susceptible of love. I confided in his honour, and with difficulty preserved my *own*. Yet, I thank Heaven, I *did* preserve it, although I lost my reason by his cruel treatment of me, and insolent behaviour to my parents. Yet this *I might* have survived: time and a proper contempt for so worthless an object, *might* have restored my mind to peace, but the death of my dear mother, entirely brought on her by her affection and care of me, was a stroke too severe for my weak frame. I feel I shall soon join her in heaven. I consent to every thing my father wishes; but I know the blow is given, and 'tis all in vain. His distress is all that lies heavy at my heart: but he has other children who are growing up; I hope, to be a comfort to him. I see, Sir Charles," added she, "that you feel compassion for our situation. You are also a man of *fashion*, yet, I hope, far different from the one I have known. Let my unhappy case sink deeply into your mind; and may no poor deserted female; may no wretched husband or father ever have cause to execrate the name of Sir Charles Wentworth "

"You may judge, ladies, what were my feelings for this poor girl. I left her with real sorrow. I enquired after Martin of some persons that knew him, and heard he was just returned from France, and was gone to Tunbridge. I called two or three times to ask after Miss Smith, and heard very unfavourable accounts of her health, but have never seen her since, till this moment; and from her appearance, I fear she will soon meet that death she has so long wished for."

Sir

Sir Charles here concluded his narrative. My aunt and myself were extremely concerned for the unfortunate Miss Smith, and joined in execrations on the wretch who had so cruelly used her, though, alas! I am afraid there are too many under circumstances similar to her's, who pine in secret, and drop like a broken lily from its stalk: but surely the day of retribution must overtake those villains, who are worse than murderers, though there is no punishment for them by our laws, severe enough to petty offenders, whilst the profligate, the ruiner of innocence, the destroyer of domestic happiness, shall be applauded as a man of gallantry, and received into company by the most virtuous of our sex. Shame on the manners of the age, and to those women who do not look with scorn and contempt on such despicable wretches!

But, my dear Mrs. Menville, I am convinced from concurring circumstances, this Martin is the very fellow whose attentions you dislike; and well may you dislike them. Your good genius, or I should, in truth, say, your judgment, pointed out the great unworthiness of a man who could dare utter such free sentiments before women of character. I need not bid you beware of him, for you must detest him. Was not Miss Ellis with you, I should be very unhappy, for I hate Miss Shepherd, yes, absolutely hate her. Pray Heaven her father may order her down to him.

Mrs. Gaywill and her conceited ape of a son give a public breakfast to-morrow at the rooms. We are invited; and I accepted the invitation in the hope of deriving much entertainment from the folly of the latter: but folly is more pardonable than vice, and therefore not entitled to the same

same contempt, though we cannot forbear laughing at the ridicule they incur, by endeavouring to appear for what nature never designed them. My aunt waits for me to accompany her on a visit. Adieu, my charming friend. Think justly of your own merit, follow the dictates of your own heart, and you must and will be happy.

Ever sincerely your's,
CHARLOTTE BERTIE.

L E T T E R XVII.

MRS. MENVILLE TO MRS. BERTIE.

WITHOUT waiting, my dear friend, for an answer to my last letter, I continue to write; for to unbosom myself, and claim your advice in my present difficulties, is my only consolation.

Yesterday morning Mrs. Shepherd very reluctantly took leave of us: she repeatedly told her daughter, if she found her father very ill, she would send immediately for her; and if recovering, she might expect her in three or four weeks in London, to take her down. Miss looked rather grave at this piece of information; but pleasure evidently danced in her eyes when the carriage drove from the house. Very soon after Mr. Martin and Mr. Thurkill were announced. The latter gentleman has frequently dined here of late, and has paid great attention to Miss Shepherd; but I have not observed any partiality on her side; she seems to flirt with every one alike. They proposed going to
Kensington

Kensington Gardens: I desired to be excused, intending to write to my father and yourself. Miss Ellis, at my request, accompanied them. They had scarcely left the house, when I was most agreeably surprised by a visit from my dear brother Harry: but my satisfaction was of short duration, when he informed me, that my uncle had in Devonshire formed a connexion with a farmer's daughter, whom he had brought with him to town, and he believed intended to marry, as he had that very morning made him a proposal of going to India, instead of entering him in the Temple, as was first intended. "Indeed," added Harry, "if he makes good the advantageous terms he talks of, and can procure me the appointment, I shall greatly prefer the situation to the study of the law, and I see plainly he wants to get rid of me."

This information gave me much uneasiness. Harry was ever dear to me. The promises my uncle had made in his favour weighed much with me on a certain occasion. I was grieved to think of parting with him for so long a voyage. He saw my emotions; and, tenderly pressing my hand, "Do not be uneasy, my dear sister: the same gracious Providence protects us every where. I feel not the smallest repugnancy to acquiesce with my uncle's wishes; on the contrary, except the pain of parting from my father and yourself, to go abroad will not cost me a single sigh."

I pressed him to stay dinner, and endeavoured to reconcile myself to a separation which I foresaw would soon take place. Mr. Menville and his party returned all to dinner at a late hour: apologies were made for dishabille by the gentlemen; the ladies shook a little powder in

their hair, without time for any other alteration. My husband received my brother with much kindness: I was gratified by his attention to him, and tried to rally my spirits, and entertain my guests with cheerfulness. We were, indeed, apparently very happy, and pleased with each other. At tea, only Harry and Mr. Martin joined us; and a party was proposed by the latter, to go and see Mrs. Jordan in Beatrice, (the Pannel.) Harry pleaded an engagement at ten o'clock; and I, having already seen the piece, declined the invitation. But soon after, Mr. Menville and Thurkill entering the room, Miss Shepherd exclaimed, "Lord, Mrs. Menville, I wish you would go to the play; what signifies having seen it before. It will amuse one for an hour or two; and that's all we wish for."

The two gentlemen just come into the room caught eagerly at her words, and in short, having intimated in a whisper to Miss Ellis, that I wanted some conversation with my brother, the whole party went off for Drury-Lane. They had scarcely left the room, before Harry, looking earnestly in my face, cried, "Pray, sister, what makes you keep that Miss Shepherd here? I hate that girl: so much levity and art I never saw equalled. I never could have supposed a character like her's was fit to be a chosen friend for you. Young as I am," added he, "I can see *through* her; and I wish from my soul you would send her home."

"Upon my word, brother," answered I, smiling, (with an aching heart,) "you pretend to vast penetration: but do not judge with that decisive air which too often accompanies the judgment of young and weak minds. You know
so

so little of the lady in question, that you must pardon me if I think your opinion of her too hastily formed."

"For your sake," replied he, gravely, "I hope it may be so. I am not, indeed, much acquainted with your sex; and 'tis my sincere wish that I may in this case judge erroneously."

The subject now changed to his East India prospects. He said his uncle had promised he would fit him out completely as a gentleman, procure him a writer's place, and give him a thousand pounds to trade with; that he had written to his father on the subject that morning, and should be determined by his advice and opinion.

We parted some time before the return of Mr. Menville and his friends, who came home in high spirits. Mr. Martin complained of my cruelty in refusing to share in the amusements of the evening. I made a slight reply; but was surprised to observe a particular civility from Mr. Menville to Miss Ellis, and a mighty good understanding between Mr. Thurkill and Miss Shepherd: I was therefore plagued with the attentions of Martin.

This morning at breakfast, Mr. Menville proposed a party to Windsor on horseback. My situation of course excluded me: Miss Ellis declined the invitation. "Well," cried Miss Shepherd, "I should like it of all things; and since these ladies refuse, I dare say Miss Chambers would like to go. You know Thurkill will be here presently to hear our plan; and I will send him on to make her get ready."

"Then this plan," said I, carelessly, "was predetermined on yesterday."

"No, not absolutely," answered Mr. Menville; "it was merely hinted at."

You must know this Miss Chambers is distantly related to the Shephets, a chamber milliner, a very decent looking young woman, but, I believe, under some pecuniary obligations to the Shepherds, as they treat her with great hauteur and familiarity, whilst her modest deportment challenges civility and countenance. Unhappy is that situation which makes the unfortunate dependent on the caprice of those, whose only advantage is perhaps the possession of a little wealth they are wholly undeserving of. To make short of the matter, Mr. Thurkill came in, was dispatched on his errand, and quickly returned with the lady's compliance; and in high spirits they soon set off. Miss Ellis retired to her dressing-room to write; and I was about to follow her example, when the servant announced Mr. Martin.

"My dear Mrs. Menville," said he, approaching me in a very familiar manner, "is it possible I find you alone! How I hate Menville for gallanting that wild girl about the country, and neglecting his charming wife!"

"If you mean any compliment to me, Sir, at the expence of *my husband*," I gravely replied, "you have entirely mistaken my character. Mr. Menville is so thoroughly indulgent to my wishes, that he never takes any step but what is perfectly agreeable to me; and I think myself much obliged to him for attending *my* friends, when I cannot make it convenient to accompany them myself."

"Devil take me, if I think so," returned he; "but you are an unfashionable wife, fond of your husband, fond of home, and indifferent to the admiration you excite, and the pangs you occasion in the bosom of your adorers."

"A pretty

"A pretty rhapsody!" said I, affecting to smile. "You gay men of the world make no difference between young women and old married ones: but I am not to be spoiled by flattery, and at present have a particular engagement: you will therefore excuse my absence." I rang the bell; the servant entered; Martin looked like a fool, but bowed, and left the room.

"This is now, my dear friend, the unpleasant situation I stand in, compelled to see this impertinent coxcomb, and behave as usual to him, otherwise it may be observed by Mr. Menville, and lead to disagreeable explanations. The subject is too delicate for me to mention, even to Miss Ellis; to you only I dare open my heart, and apply for advice, under circumstances to which you are no stranger. Another care occupies my mind: I every day look forward to an event which may bring me new duties, or perhaps call me to the land of spirits. I am at times very low, yet I endeavour to appear cheerful, particularly to Mr. Menville, who expresses earnest wishes for a *son*. May every thing happen which can give him pleasure; let me hear from you soon; and believe me;

Ever your's,

EMILY MENVILLE.

L E T T E R XVIII.

CAPTAIN HARLEY TO MISS ELLIS.

W H E N last I wrote my amiable friend, I was extremely low, and exhausted by the fatigues
 G 3 I had

I had undergone ; but my troubles and difficulties have since augmented. Within a week after my last dispatch, Lord Trueby quitted Spain, with a mind deeply depressed by remorse and affliction. I had met with such disagreeable occurrences, that I was very anxious to leave Madrid ; and Clayton promised to accompany me in a few days. Gratitude and politeness carried me frequently to the Count's. The charming Antonia received me always with evident satisfaction : not so, Donna Isabella ; ill-humour and haughtiness sat on every feature ; and whenever I ventured on any subject to express my sentiments, they were sure of a flat contradiction from her. A conduct so marked by contempt, excited me one day to enquire of Antonia, how I had been so unhappy as to incur the displeasure of her sister.

" You are an Englishman and a Protestant," replied she : " from the narrow principles of her governess she has unhappily imbibed a violent hatred to both appellations. I resided with an aunt, some miles from Madrid, until the death of my mother : she was liberal-minded and charitable : she taught me to hate no man for his country or religious principles. ' Education, my dear niece,' she used to say, ' forms our mind, and fixes our religion. Born in England we had been protestants : the English, born and educated in Spain, would doubtless have been catholics. Good men and women of every nation, my dear niece, are entitled to our respect and esteem.'—' From her precepts," added the lovely Signora, " I have learnt to esteem Captain Harley : from those of a contrary tendency, my sister has imbibed prejudices which no merit can alter."

The

The very next evening, which I had spent at the Count's by his particular request, returning home, I was within a few yards of my own lodgings, when I was suddenly beset by three men, who made repeated thrusts at me. Having my sword, I endeavoured to defend myself; but doubtless should have been overpowered, had not a party of serenaders come up most opportunely to my assistance. The assassins fled, but not till I had received two deep wounds; one in my shoulder, the other on my left hip. The persons who came so timely to save my life, conveyed me fainting into the house. A surgeon was sent for, and my wounds dressed, which he pronounced dangerous. The next morning I had a visit from the Count. He had heard of the accident, or rather assassination, and came with expressions of the kindest concern for himself and eldest daughter. I was too ill to acknowledge the honour he did me; and continued for four days in a very doubtful state. The fifth my surgeons gave me hopes of recovery; and, in short, at the expiration of nine days I was pronounced out of danger; the fever was reduced, and the wounds in a very favourable way. The tenth morning after my illness, my servants brought me the following letter.

ANTONIA TO CAPTAIN HARLEY.

“AH! Captain Harley, I shall never forgive myself. I have been, though innocently, the cause of the vile outrage you have met with. Jealousy, in this country, is often attended with fatal effects to the object of it. The Duke de Solis has long loved me; but his passion was to

me detestable ; his character, his person, his principles, all were disagreeable. With my sister he was a favourite : she warmly espoused his interest. Unhappily the civilities which your merit demanded, she imputed to a different cause. She more than once upbraided me for a degrading partiality, which no assertions of mine could remove from her mind. She acquainted the Duke with her conjectures. He, proud, revengeful, and furious, resolved to have you murdered. You know what followed.

“ Yesterday morning one of the Duke’s servants informed my maid of his master’s crimes ; insolently adding, “ that, although you had escaped *this* time, your life should be the forfeit, if you dared to visit me.” This menace, from another man, I might have despised ; but I know the Duke : and under that conviction I have of his baseness, I beseech you, (however reluctantly, for *indeed it is* with reluctance I make the request,) I beseech you to leave Madrid. I should be the most miserable of human beings, if any accident happened to you ; so would my father. O, then, most amiable man, leave us : quit your sincere friends : spare us the affliction, the misery of being the cause of your death, a reflection I never could survive. That detestable Duke ! I never will be his : a nunnery or death is far preferable to that thought. Adieu, then : do not forget us : perhaps in happier days we may meet again. Yet, no ! that is a felicity I can never, never hope for. Adieu, then, for ever, amiable Harley ; hasten from Madrid, if you wish me peace ; and may your God, and my God, who is the same beneficent Being, ever bless and preserve you.

ANTONIA.”

Judge

Judge, my dear Miss Ellis, how I was affected by this letter. I determined to follow the advice of the charming writer, and quit Spain. Clayton readily fell in with my views.

The first moment I could bear the carriage, I was conveyed to the Count's palace. He took a very affectionate leave of me; and when I advanced to pay my respects to his daughters, the lovely Antonia could not command her emotions. She burst into tears, and, with a blessing scarcely articulate, left the room. Her sister followed, with a cold compliment and averted looks. We returned to our lodgings. My heart was deeply oppressed; but the next morning we quitted Madrid, where I had seen only distress and melancholy scenes; and we resolved to bend our course towards Switzerland. After a long and tedious journey, we are now safely arrived at Geneva.

I will not attempt to entertain you by any description of the hair-breadth escapes we had in our travels; much less with an account of the countries, towns, and villages, we passed through. Every place is already so well described in the writings of many eminent men, that I will not trespass on your time and judgment by less accurate observations. Besides, to say truth, my heart was too much occupied in its sorrows and painful reflections, to admit of amusement, even from some very beautiful and wonderful scenes which passed under my eye, though few could exceed, or indeed equal, the enchanting spot we now reside at. We have hired a house on the banks of the lake; and here, in a mild evening, the parting sun playing on the water, the happy rustics dancing on the banks, the view of the

city on one side, and the wild romantic hills on the other, are altogether truly picturesque and beautiful.

In your last letter, my dear Miss Ellis, you inform me of your arrival in town, and kindly give me an entertaining account of your several visitors. It is not my custom to speak freely of the ladies; yet, I must own, I do not like Miss Shepherd; and why Mr. Menville should select such a companion for his amiable wife, I cannot divine. I think it rather singular, too, that your visitors are all of the male kind; but perhaps, by this time, your society is enlarged.

My heart is always with *you*; and I never can sufficiently acknowledge the friendship of my worthy Clayton, in attaching himself to a companion so melancholy, and so little capable of profiting by his kind endeavours to amuse me. *Your* letters are the only pleasures which affect my soul; and though accompanied by painful emotions, yet these pains are far more desirable than any amusements the gaiety of the world can offer. Write, then, my sweet friend; write, I conjure you, *very* often. Probably we shall remain some time here; but, wherever we go, whatever country we shall inhabit, my mind, my thoughts, will be invariably fixed on you and your beloved companion. May every blessing Heaven can bestow attend you both.

FREDERIC HARLEY.

LETTER

L E T T E R XIX.

MRS. BERTIE TO MRS. MENVILLE.

I HAVE this moment received your letter, my dear Mrs. Menville, but I postpone my remarks for the present, until I have acquainted you with some particular occurrences which have happened to myself.

In my last, I informed you of Mrs. Gaywill's public breakfast; my aunt and self attended, a very large company was assembled, and to do the lady justice, the tables were set out very elegantly. Mrs. Hamwood and her two daughters, who I mentioned to you as our next door neighbours, were of the party; they were dressed in a most extravagant style, showy, tawdry, and expensive, but not genteel; however, young Gaywill, who is quite a coxcomb in dress, appeared particularly delighted with the two young ladies; the youngest is really a pretty girl, and not quite so affected as the mother and eldest sister; but the latter attracted Gaywill. His mother (who I suspect of a design on *me*, though older than her son) was greatly mortified at what she called a strange preference; but alas! for the first time she found her authority disputed; the young man stuck close to the lady; she was obliged to bustle about, and pay attention to every body herself, and as it fortunately happened, no one present regretted the preference, the entertainment passed off very well; the happy young lady, gratified by the great attention of the founder of the feast, swam about the room with such exultation, that really was diverting to the highest degree. Sir
Charles

Charles Wentworth, who was of our party, had been called off by some gentleman; he now approached us with an elderly man of very respectable appearance; he fixed his eyes on me with such an expression of earnestness, that I felt extremely confused; Sir Charles introduced him as a particular friend of his, just arrived from the continent, but never named him, which I then thought extraordinary: however, we left the entertainment together; they conducted us home, and being invited by my aunt, entered the house. After we were seated in the drawing-room, Sir Charles came up to me, and with a serious look, said,

“Do not be alarmed, madam, if I presume to introduce, in the person of my friend, a gentleman who claims a connexion with you, and longs to embrace you as a near relation.”

“A relation of mine!” I exclaimed, “for heaven’s sake, what is his name?”

The gentleman now arose, and advancing, took my passive hand, and bowing on it, “My name, dear lady, is Sackville; I came from Lisbon, and presume to claim you as my niece.”

“Mr. Bertie’s uncle! I faintly articulated;”

“Yes, and your’s also, if you will allow me the title,” he replied.

I endeavoured to recover myself. “You do me an honour, sir, I will try to deserve; it will be my pride to be found worthy the distinction.” My aunt paid him every civility and attention. He told us, that having lost an only daughter, about eight months ago, it had greatly impaired his health; and Lisbon growing very hateful to him, where every object reminded

reminded him of his misfortune, he took the resolution to come over to England, and enquire after me, as he had no relations alive, neither in the West-Indies nor in Lisbon. That taking Bath in his way to London, he had met with Sir Charles Wentworth, whom he had formerly known abroad; and being persuaded to accompany him to Mr. Gaywill's breakfast, had the pleasure of hearing I was there, but did not chuse to be introduced too abruptly, nor in the public room.

You may be assured, my dear Mrs. Menville, that after the first distressing sensations were over, I rejoiced in the acquisition of a relation so worthy and respectable. My uncle and aunt were delighted with him, and he spends most of his time in amusing the former, who, I am grieved to say, receives no benefit from our Bath excursion. Yesterday morning I was in the breakfast parlour alone, when Mr. Sackville came in; he seated himself by me, and after a little common chat, said, "I feel highly gratified at the compliment you pay to the memory of my unfortunate nephew, by refusing, as I hear you have done, so many advantageous offers, and by your very kind reception of me. He well deserved to be remembered, for never man spoke in such raptures of a woman, as he used to do of his charming wife. I beg your pardon, my dear niece, for giving you those emotions (I could not command my tears) but there is a man, and the only man I know, deserving you, or worthy to succeed poor Bertie, which is Sir Charles Wentworth."

"Sir Charles Wentworth," I exclaimed.

"Yes,

“ Yes, my dear madam, he loves you with the tenderest affection; but supposing himself and fortune unworthy your acceptance, has condemned his tongue to silence, yet I am sure you have judgment sufficient to discover his merit; and as to any difficulties on the score of fortune, thank heaven I can remove them; tell me then, my dear niece, what is your opinion of Sir Charles?”

“ Indeed, sir,” I replied, “ I am so much agitated by the first part of your address, as to be entirely incapable of answering to your question, which is very unexpected.”

“ Well,” said he, rising, “ I will not press you farther now, but pray consider what I have said on a subject very near my heart, and on which depends the happiness of a most worthy man whom I greatly esteem.”

When he left the apartment I was deeply affected; the remembrance of Mr. Bertie, which he had revived in a very painful manner; the abrupt information respecting Sir Charles Wentworth, of which, I declare to you, I had not the smallest suspicion, altogether rendered me incapable of following him to the drawing-room. I retired to my own apartment, and did not join the company 'till summoned to dinner. As nothing particular was addressed to me, I recovered my spirits, which soon after suffered a dreadful alarm; the table was scarcely cleared, when my uncle, with a heavy sigh, fell from his chair in a fit; you may easily conceive our terror; near three hours passed before he was perfectly restored; I sat up all night, as my aunt could not be persuaded to go to bed; thank heaven he is much better this morning. Sir Charles and Mr. Sackville persuade him to try
Bristol,

Bristol, and afterwards to take a journey to the Spa; he inclines much more to visit Lisbon, but from that voyage they earnestly dissuade him; I suppose his determination will not be very sudden, but I hope he will have no return of his late attack.

And now, my dear Mrs. Menville, I turn to your letter, where almost every line gives me concern; that you should be obliged to invite that Miss Shepherd is a horrid thing, and yet certainly it was most prudent to comply with your husband's request; but permit me to give you one hint, which is, that as far as your situation will admit of it without over fatigue, I would advise you to be of their pleasurable parties; I could adduce many reasons in support of that advice, but as they might not be very pleasant in their applications, I refer to your own good sense and judgment, to discover the motives which induce me to make the request. Should my uncle determine to go abroad, I am certainly shall determine to accompany him, for I would not leave my aunt to bear her anxiety alone, for the world; but in that case, I will steal two or three days previous to our departure, and fly to London, that I may embrace the friend of my heart, should the metropolis not be in our route. Adieu, my dear Mrs. Menville; pray continue to write on without restraint, 'till you hear from, or see me.

Ever your's,

CHARLOTTE BERTIE.

I am this instant informed, beau Gaywill is gone to Scotland with the eldest Miss Hamwood; dear me, "What will mamma Gaywill say to a match.

match with a cheesemonger's daughter?" *her* son, who was in *her eyes* deserving of a duchess—they have made quick work of it.

L E T T E R XX.

MRS. MENVILLE TO MRS. BERTIE.

I AM very low spirited, my dear friend. Clide me not, for indeed I am not happy, yet I expect the felicity of seeing my dearest father to-morrow, in consequence of Harry's letter to him. Whether he will approve of the India Voyage, I know not; but I am persuaded he will be grieved and disappointed at my uncle's conduct. Yesterday morning I drove to his house, whilst Miss Ellis and Miss Shepherd went a-shopping. He received me with evident confusion and embarrassment, entered into the great views he had for my brother, if he coincided with his wishes, congratulated *himself* on the grandeur and *happiness* I enjoyed, and, in short, hurried from one subject to another, evidently to avoid any particular conversation. No mention was made of the farmer's daughter; and I neither expressed pleasure nor dissatisfaction at this scheme for Harry, consequently we parted on good terms.

On my return home, I found Miss Ellis and Mr. Colemore alone in the drawing-room. Judging from their appearance some interesting conversation had taken place, I was about to withdraw, when she entreated my return, saying, "Mrs. Menville, Sir, is the friend of my heart: my greatest pride is to merit her esteem:

on

on her judgment, I am sure, I can rest with confidence; and therefore you will oblige me in making known to her every thing which has just now occurred. I think myself honoured by your partiality; but my friend and parents must sanction your pretensions before I can give them any countenance.

She left the room; and Mr. Colemore, without hesitation, avowed his admiration of Miss Ellis, and the offer he had presumed to make of his heart and hand, if she had no particular attachment to another.

It instantly darted into my mind the letter I had accidentally seen of Captain Harley's, and her obvious confusion when I entered the room. Under the uncertain conjectures I entertained, I could only reply to Mr. Colemore, "that I was persuaded Miss Ellis had a just sense of his merit, and that I highly respected him, both on his own account, and the proof he had given of his discernment in selecting my friend; that I was persuaded Miss Ellis was above keeping any gentleman in suspense, and doubtless would either herself, or through me, inform him of her sentiments."

He besought my interest, and left me much impressed in his favour. I went up to Miss Ellis's dressing-room, and found her in a thoughtful posture. She arose on my entrance; but, seating myself by her, I said, "I have been applied to by Mr. Colemore for *my* interest; but, highly as I think of that gentleman, *you* must authorize me, before I undertake a commission of that importance."

"My dear Mrs. Menville," answered she, "I have no objection to Mr. Colemore's person or manners; his fortune is superior to my expectations;

expectations; his character is in his favour; I have long beheld him with esteem; but——”

She stopt. I thought of the letter.

“ But what, my dear girl? From whence arises your hesitation; Have you any preference for another?”

“ No,” replied she, with vivacity, “ I have not; but in short I see and hear of such wonderful changes in the minds of men; I have seen the most ardent lover of one of the most perfect of her sex, in a short time, behave with indifference and neglect; I have heard of so much instability in the affections of men, that I tremble at the idea of a coldness my temper and fortitude would be very unequal to support. And why should I, with such small pretensions to merit, expect to meet with a husband superior in fidelity and attention to his wife, which those of real and exalted worth often fail in obtaining, and without which I must be miserable?”

“ If your objections to Mr. Colemore spring from no other source,” I replied, “ I think a little reflection will do *them* away. He has lived long in town without any impeachment on his character; his education and sentiments were formed on a different plan from men of the world; he has fallen into no dissipations; his fortune is unimpaired; and he could not give a stronger proof of his judgment and integrity of heart, than in selecting a woman of merit from the gaudy butterflies which are perpetually playing round men, to attract their notice.”

She smiled at my last words, which I believe I spoke *rather warmly*.

“ Well,” said she, “ let Mr. Colemore then make his sentiments known to my father and mother;”

mother ; and if, on a proper investigation of his character, they approve of his addresses, I will honestly own to you, my dear Mrs. Menville, it will give me satisfaction to make him happy."

I was delighted with her determination : but a little curiosity concerning my former conjectures recurring, after some hesitation, " Pray, my dear," asked I, " do you correspond with Captain Harley ?"

She blushed exceedingly ; but presently replied with great frankness, " *I do*, entirely at the request of my father, who, having a sincere regard for the Captain, and yet incapable of being a punctual correspondent, begged his acceptance of my pen, instead of his own more valuable one. I have had some letters from him which have given me both pain and pleasure. I wished often to mention them to you, but was at a loss how to act ; yet, as the subject is now begun by yourself, will you permit me to communicate them to you ?"

" No, my love," said I, " by no means. I wish Captain Harley extremely well ; he has my most perfect esteem : but ever since I became the wife of Mr. Menville, it was both my duty and inclination to forget him. At present I could read his letters with the utmost indifference ; but I conceive it a respect I owe to Mr. Menville and myself, not to think of him but as an entire stranger ; therefore, though a little female curiosity prompted me to ask the question, it was on your account only, and the subject will never be renewed by me."

I retired to dress, happy in the agreeable prospects of this worthy girl, and the delight it would give her revered parents to see her settled with a man so unexceptionable as Mr. Colemore. At dinner,
Mr.

Mr. Menville told me two ladies intended paying their compliments to me that morning, and delivered me a card, to which I must make a return next day, it having been given to him during my absence. The card run thus :

LADY HARTWILL AND MRS. BLOOMFIELD,
GROSVENOR-SQUARE.

"Are you intimate with those ladies?" I demanded.

"Very slightly," replied he; "but meeting them the other day in company with a gentleman of my acquaintance, but who I had not seen since my marriage, he congratulated me, of course, and the ladies told me they would do themselves the honour to knock at your door. They are women of fashion and character; and you will return the visit to-morrow, or the following day at furthest."

"May I flatter myself that you will accompany me?" I asked; "otherwise it will be extremely awkward, should I be let in."

"I will certainly attend you," he replied.

"How frightful," cried Miss Shepherd, to run about visiting people one does not know nor care for! I thought Mrs. Menville was not fond of company."

"Not particularly so, Miss Shepherd; but I shall always rejoice in the society of *worthy* people; for, though I hate a crowd, I like a select party; and I own I have felt a little mortified that hitherto our visitors have been confined to one sex only."

"Well," said she, "I am sure there is more pleasure in their society than in a party of censorious young women, or old dowagers."

"I made

“ I made no reply, and the conversation became general. — In the evening we sat down to cards ; I was placed at the whist-table with Mr. Colemore, a Mr. Anderson, and Mr. Martin: the latter was my partner. His attentions, a hundred impertinent allusions which he made on our situation, his odious looks, in short, his whole behaviour was calculated to give me pain ; and I observed, once or twice, Mr. Colemore viewed him with indignation. I played with so much confusion and ill-humour, that we lost the rubber ; and I arose to give place to Mr. Thurkill, who had cut out from the other table. I excused myself from playing again, and chose to amuse myself with looking on. “ Standers-by see most of the game.” My observations were not pleasing ones. I turned from a scene most poignant to my feelings, and intended leaving the room ; but, whether from the heat, sitting so long, or from some other cause, I know not, but before I got to the door, my head grew giddy, I uttered a faint scream, and had not that odious Martin flown to support me, must have fallen to the ground. I lost my senses for a few moments: recovering, I found myself still supported by Martin, Miss Ellis on her knees, applying salts, and the company crowded round me. Mr. Menville was standing near me ; taking my hand, “ How do you find yourself, Emily ? Pray, my dear, let your woman attend you to your bed.”

I told him I was better, but would take his advice. Having apologized to the company, I was led out of the room, but not before that daring fellow presumed to press my hand, and sigh most deplorably. Mr. Menville came to bed very late : his words were kind, but the manner

manner, alas! my dear Mrs. Bertie, his voice was chilling and indifferent. When in company he treats me with politeness; but when alone, with a gravity in his air that sometimes wounds my very soul. Ah! my dear friend, riches and splendor alone will not gratify the feelings of a delicate and susceptible mind; they cannot confer happiness; they cannot procure peace to that bosom which sighs for domestic enjoyments! Ever since I became the wife of Mr. Menville, the study of my life has been to please him; but a stronger influence than mine counteracts all my efforts. I can no longer conceal from you what is but too obvious to all our visitors. Miss Shepherd entirely possesses that heart I once thought solely mine; gay, volatile, and coquetish. She has caught the attention of Mr. Menville, and I have no longer the power to charm: I fear he even regrets the hour he gave his hand to me. My dear father! never shall you know my disappointment and sorrow; to you I will appear happy, nor rend your bosom with the knowledge how much I sacrifice to appearances. You only, my beloved friend, shall know the secrets of my heart. Do you instruct me in the arts of pleasing; tell me what I must do to regain lost affection; teach me the happy art of becoming ever new and desirable in the eyes of my husband; 'tis all the felicity this world can bestow. I am not romantic; I do not expect adoration or rapture. Oh! no: *all* I ask, *all* I wish, is that perfect esteem, that reasonable passion, which promotes a mutual happiness; and without which a married life must be a wretched one. Yet I will not give way to melancholy reflections: I will strictly endeavour to perform my duties, and leave the rest to Providence.

I am

I am now waiting for Mr. Menville to conduct me to Grovesnor-Square; an awkward visit: yet I really wish for the society of some rational females. Mr. Menville proposes giving a route and supper a fortnight hence, and talks of sending out cards to-morrow. I made no objection, though I think it likely I shall be confined before that period.

I am just returned from Lady Hartwill's most exceedingly delighted with my visit. The ladies were at home. On my entrance, her Ladyship took my hand. "I am highly gratified, my dear Mrs. Menville, by this early compliment. You find me prepared to love and respect you. The name and merits of Miss Oswald I have long been acquainted with."

She then introduced me to her sister, Mrs. Bloomfield, who received me with equal politeness. These ladies are both widows of large independent fortunes; and from an affection and friendship not often met with, chuse to reside together. — Mrs. Bloomfield is about forty, elegant in her person, but not handsome, gentle in her manners, and unassuming. Lady Hartwill is three years younger; her person not so genteel as her sister's, but a lovely face: in every feature you may trace vivacity, happily blended with sweetness, and a wish to please. The frankness of her manners, with the most interesting countenance I ever beheld, inspire you with love and confidence the moment she addresses you.

"Two summers ago," said her Ladyship, "I was on a visit in the neighbourhood of Sudbury, where I heard the amiable Miss Oswald
the

the theme of universal admiration ; and every family I visited regretted that the very retired disposition of Mr. Oswald precluded them the happiness of being intimate with his charming daughter. About a week since, when I came to town, I heard, among other news, Mr. Menville was married to Miss Oswald. I longed to pay my compliments ; and was casting about on the propriety of my visit, when luckily we met Mr. Menville ; and, through the medium of a friend with us, I conveyed my intention of waiting on you."

" Bless me !" cried out Mrs. Bloomfield, " what a long preface, sister. You oppress Mrs. Menville with a tedious speech, whilst I hope my eyes speak for me, and say how happy I am to see her."

" You do indeed oppress me, ladies ; for I am unable to make any return to so much polite kindness. I feel myself greatly honoured by an approbation I must *study* to deserve ; for at present, new to the world, almost a stranger to its inhabitants, unacquainted with fashionable manners, I am sensible of my own deficiencies, and must encroach on goodness like yours to supply them."

" Upon my word, ladies," said Mr. Menville, you will leave nothing for me to say, you pay such pretty compliments to each other, that they must entirely distance such poor fellows as I am."

" Why, indeed," replied her Ladyship, " at our time of life we have no chance of exciting admiration ; and compliments which we are conscious of not deserving, must depress, rather than raise vanity."

" You

"You now, indeed," answered he, smiling, "prevent me from saying a word; but you must permit me to *think*, ladies, nor can you render me *blind*, though you oblige me to be dumb."

I was so very much delighted with the attentions of the two ladies, that, although I arose twice to take my leave, I was easily persuaded to resume my seat, and I did not leave them until it was near time to dress for dinner.

"Promise me, my dear Mrs. Menville, you will indulge my wish of being on the most intimate footing with you," said Lady Hartwill. "I am indeed old enough to be your mother, but consider me as an elder sister, equally attached to you by blood as affection."

"Such violent friendships at first sight," cried Mr. Menville, "would be considered by men in general, to be of short duration; and ladies are seldom believed to feel any real partiality for each other."

"But pray consider, Mr. Menville, your Lady had my most perfect esteem before I had the honor of knowing her; and now I am happy to have inclination confirmed by judgment."

I bowed in silence to a compliment I shall be most anxious to deserve.—When we returned, I could not help priding myself a little on the distinguished honor which the notice of those ladies conferred on me, for I had equal attention shewn me by Mrs. Bloomfield; but 'tis impossible to repeat all our conversation. I thought, at dinner, Mr. Menville eyed me with kindness, Miss Shepherd with envy and malignity. I was however in an uncommon flow of spirits, which Miss Ellis and Mr. Colemore greatly encouraged, and I readily joined in a party pro-

posed to Drury-Lane, I am now just ready to join the company, having written by bits and scraps, as I could find time: my mind rather a little more easy than when I began this letter. I hourly expect to hear from you. Believe me ever

your's sincerely

E. MENVILLE.

shall write again to-morrow.

L E T T E R XXI.

MRS. MENVILLE IN CONTINUATION.

I FINISHED my letter last night, when I was just setting off for Drury-Lane; at the house we were joined by Martin and Thurkill (the latter a constant attendant on Miss Shepherd) and in the only box we could procure seats were Lord Longfield and two gentlemen who had taken the front row; on our entrance they rose up, and insisted very politely we should take their places; as I conceived they were earnest in their civilities, and hate a bustle in a public place, I accepted the offer without hesitation, only making a slight acknowledgment; our gentlemen would not take the second row, consequently Lord Longfield and his party were behind us, and payed us every attention which politeness could warrant. When the play was ended, Lord Longfield took my hand to conduct me out; at the back of the box were the gentlemen of our party; Martin hastily advanced,

Mrs.

"Mrs. Menville, will you permit me to conduct you to your carriage?"

"Pardon me, sir," said his Lordship, "I have already the honour of Mrs. Menville's hand, and will attend her to her carriage myself."

Martin drew back, with fury and vexation in his countenance; we were soon placed in the carriage, and to my inexpressible surprise, Mr. Menville, when his Lordship was taking leave, said, "he should be glad of the honour of thanking Lord Longfield for his civilities, in Bedford-Square." My Lord bowed, and replied, "he would soon profit by so obliging an invitation."

I was all astonishment; the compliment those gentlemen had payed us was a very common one, in a public place, and Mr. Menville's knowledge of his Lordship was so very slight, as scarcely to warrant such a return. I was not indeed displeased, though surprised, as except Mr. Colemore, I do not like one of our male visitors.

Martin was gloomy and unsociable at supper; Thurkill taken up with his attentions to Miss Shepherd; Mr. Colemore and Miss Ellis wore an air of visible constraint; in short, for once Mr. Menville and myself were the only unembarrassed persons present; a party so little pleased with each other, you may suppose, separated at an early hour. This morning, Mr. Colemore payed me a visit in my dressing-room, and I rejoiced him with permission from Miss Ellis, to address her parents; I never saw a man more delighted; he hastened from me to write; as I have little doubt of the Doctor's approbation of an offer so advantageous

I feel much delight in the prospect of their approaching union. I now hourly expect my father; Harry dines with us to meet him; my uncle was invited, but he pleaded business, though I doubt his real objection was to avoid the angry eye of my father; conscious he has not acted right. Harry is come, adieu, my dear.

The family party, all except my father and myself, are gone to Astley's; I believe they supposed we might wish to be alone after so long an absence, and they judged rightly. My father arrived before the dinner hour; our meeting was truly tender and affectionate; he pressed me in his arms, "Let me enfold my darling, and I hope happy daughter," said he, with anxious looks.

"Yes, my dearest father, your child is happy, doubly so in seeing you;" but ah! my dear Mrs. Bertie, my beloved parent is much altered in those few months I have been from him; he looks pale and emaciated in the face, whilst a dropsical habit seems to gain ground on his body; his legs are swelled, his breath short, and indeed he appears very unwell; my tears would fall, but I imputed them to joy; he viewed the house, the furniture and equipage, with evident satisfaction—showy trifles alas! how insufficient to produce content! yet he thought otherwise, heaven grant he may never be undeceived. As I expected, he is much exasperated with my uncle, and at first appeared very unwilling to consent that his son should go to India, but Harry expressed his inclination so strongly, that at last he wrung from him a reluctant acquiescence. A younger brother of my mother's was in the company's service, but being taken
a pri-

a prisoner eight years ago, from that period he has never been heard of; whether dead or alive we know not, but most likely the former. The uncertainty of his fate gave my poor mother inexpressible uneasiness, but she was at length persuaded to believe him dead, and grew more resigned. My father mentioned the circumstances which befel him to Harry.

“If you do go to India, my dear son, endeavour, if possible, to obtain some traces of your uncle’s fate,” poor Harry Seymour can scarcely remember me, as he left England within three months after my marriage; but he was your mother’s darling brother; heaven knows what his fate may be, yet it will be some satisfaction to know when and how he died. As you go out in a civil employ, the dangers he experienced, I hope you will never encounter, and if we ever meet again, heaven grant I may embrace a son, both virtuous and happy. I felt my spirits so much affected, that I left those dear relatives together, and having given ease to my full heart by a flood of tears, and written thus far, I now return to the drawing-room.

The party from Astley’s came home in high spirits, every one looked happy. Mr. Menville paid the most marked attention to my father, which pleased him, and highly gratified me. This morning my father is gone to call on my uncle, and settle things for my brother’s voyage, which takes place in less than a fortnight; dear fellow! may heaven preserve him from every trouble and disaster! Mr. Menville is busy making out cards for his entertainment, assisted by Thurkill and Martin, who almost live here, I think. I wish not for a circle so

enlarged, for I like not dissipation nor a croud; a very few men and woman of character and polished manners, is the society calculated to give pleasure and improvement: but Mr. Menville has a right to please himself, he loves company, and a great number of his acquaintance are now come to town, and have left cards. "Lady Hartwill and her sister in the drawing-room," I fly to them.

My charming visitants have just left me, more and more delighted with the friendship they offered me. I introduced Miss Ellis and Miss Shepherd to the ladies, they were politely received; her ladyship told Miss Ellis, she respected the character of Doctor Ellis, and was happy to see his daughter. She then invited us in a familiar friendly way, to spend the following day with them, *en famille*, said she, for I will let in no others, that I may enjoy your company without interruption. We accepted the invitation with pleasure. Pray bring Mr. Menville, your father and brother, said Mrs. Bloomfield, we shall have no other beaux; permit me then to send down for Mr. Menville, and enquire into his engagements.

"That's rightly thought of," said her ladyship, "those impertinent men are always forming plans for their own amusement; there's no answering for them."

"Oh," cried Miss Shepherd, "I think I can answer for Mr. Menville to-morrow."

"Indeed, madam," replied her ladyship, in an accent of surprise, and a scrutinizing look, "you have the honor then of being in his confidence I presume?"

Miss Shepherd, with all her effrontery, blushed, but before she could answer, Mr. Menville entered,

tered, introducing Lord Longfield. His Lordship knowing the elegant sisters, after paying his compliments to me with the highest respect, advanced to them..

"Upon my honour," said Lady Hartwill, "few things could give me greater pleasure than seeing your Lordship in town; you know you were always a violent favourite of mine, and I feel half inclined, if these ladies will permit me, to break through a resolution just now made, and invite you to eat your mutton at my house to-morrow, with a family party."

"I hope these ladies," answered he, bowing to us, "will not have the cruelty to forbid the indulgence you seem inclined to honour me with."

"I have no objection," said Mrs. Bloomfield, "if Mrs. Menville has none."

"I never can feel any, madam, I replied, to a wish of Lady Hartwill's and yours."

"Objection!" cried Miss Shepherd, rudely interrupting me, "bless me, I think his Lordship's company will be a great acquisition."

"You are very polite, madam," said he bowing gravely to her, "and the ladies do me great honor."

"But pray," exclaimed Mr. Menville, "may I be permitted to ask, what this party is, in which the ladies of *my* family seem included, and whether the *resolution*, which, like most female ones, will be easily rescinded, cannot add me to the humber."

"Help me, dear ladies," cried Lady Hartwill, "to punish this man for his impertinent remark, I do assure you," added she, smiling; had you not been an exemption from the resolution before it was formed, you should

have rued the day when you dared to ridicule our instability : but to be short, these ladies do me the favour of dining with me to-morrow ; Mr. Oswald, his son, and you, sir, were included in the invitation ; *that* young lady," bowing to Miss Shepherd, " has been so kind as to answer for your being disengaged ; what say *you*, sir ?"

" That young lady, madam, was very sensible I could no where find equal pleasure to that of waiting on your ladyship, and therefore rightly judged I *would* not be engaged."

" Very well hit off," said Mrs. Bloomfield, smiling, and rising up, " you forget, sister, the important business of calling at your milliner's."

" True," answered her ladyship, but a small time is sufficient to sacrifice to vanity ; however, we have intruded on Mrs. Menville's hour for dress, I believe, therefore I am ready to attend you ; remember I expect you all very early to-morrow ; as an old-fashioned woman, I dine at five o'clock."

" Ah !" cried Mr. Menville, " how mortified you would be if we took your old-fashioned woman upon trust, without looking in your face."

" Not I, indeed," answered she, gaily, " my youthful days are over, and to be even with you, I will honestly confess, I once thought myself wonderfully handsome ; a hundred idle fellows who followed my train, confirmed the idea ; every one must die if I favoured another, and when at last, at my father's request, I gave my hand to Lord Hartwill, I expected the most dismal tragedies, and dying lovers complaints, from every quarter. Alas ! no such things happened,

pened, my quondam swains consoled themselves with other pursuits, and many of those, who two months before, could not live without me, I met paying devoirs to other women before my face; so, in short, I began to think a little more humbly of myself; every day's experience gave a blow to my self-love, and as my principles would not permit me to receive the idle attentions of profligates, I grew wiser and better every day; and now gentlefolks, at the matron-like age of eight and thirty, you behold me a reasonable woman, without expectations or vanity, and determined to make my life comfortable, by the enjoyment of a select and pleasing society. So here ends my eventful history, and now, sister, I am at your service."

She accepted Mr. Menville's hand; Lord Longfield offered his to Mrs. Bloomfield, and having conducted the ladies to their carriage, they returned.

"What a charming woman Lady Hartwill is," said Mr. Menville.

"She really is a *valuable* woman," added Lord Longfield, "and her conduct in a marriage life with an elderly man, and her subsequent behaviour, has stamp'd her a respectable character."

"I like *her* well enough," said Miss Shepherd, in a careless way, "but her sister is a mere piece of still life, without animation."

"Yet Mrs. Bloomfield is certainly very amiable," replied Lord Longfield, "she has not the wit and vivacity of Lady Hartwill indeed, but she has sense and sensibility."

His Lordship then turning to me, entered into general subjects, and after staving about a quarter of an hour, took leave of us, receiving a

general invitation from Mr. Menville, to visit us on a friendly footing, which was accepted with pleasure.

I had just finished dressing when my father came into the room; I dismissed my woman, as I saw by his countenance he was desirous of speaking to me.

"I have seen Mr. Seymour, he has procured a good situation for your brother, with very strong recommendations; he gives him a thousand pounds to trade with; your generous husband," added he, "made Harry a present of two hundred pound bank notes, to equip himself decently; I hope, therefore, since my boy wishes to go, he will not embark without such advantages as may promise him success. Your uncle appeared so conscious and embarrassed, that I felt myself unable to upbraid him, and in short, we parted very good friends."

"I rejoice to hear it, my dear sir," I replied, "but pray how does my brother Anthony go on; he never writes me?"

"So, so, answered my father; he is a little too extravagant, but he has an offer of going abroad in the summer, with a young Nobleman, without being at any expence to himself."

"In what view then is he to appear?" I asked.

"Entirely as a friend and companion, but I have acceded to the proposition conditionally, only that he pays his own travelling expences; as to the article of *table* expences, I shall not contend about the matter, because the whole expenditure would be more than I can afford. But pray my dear Emily, why do you keep this Miss Shepherd here?"

I told

I told my father how things were situated, he shook his head, "They are all artful people, I wish her out of your house, and I fear Mr. Menville will repent placing his affairs in the hands of old Shepherd." A summons to dinner broke off this conversation.

When we retired to the drawing room, I thought there was something very particular in Miss Shepherd's looks, at last addressing Miss Ellis,

"I understand, Madam, Mr. Colemore has asked permission to address you, and that we shall soon have a wedding."

"I sincerely wish it may be so," answered I, seeing my friend a little confused.

"Well," resumed Miss, "it will be a little singular, should you marry both your visitors off."

"Indeed it would give me much pleasure, Miss Shepherd, if for your advantage."

"Why then," said she, "though Miss Ellis has been *so very reserved*, I shall make no scruple to tell you, that wretch Thurkill has teased me out of my consent, for him to apply to my father. Pray tell me, Mrs. Menville, what you think of him?"

"Indeed, Miss Shepherd, I know so little of Mr. Thurkill, that I do not think myself qualified to give an opinion."

"Nor," added I, smiling, "can it be of any consequence to you, when you have made up your mind, previous to asking it."

"Mr. Menville speaks well of him," said she, "he is not a Nabob indeed, *every one has not* the good fortune to meet with such, he has twelve hundred a year however, and my father can give *me* something, I suppose; so we may make

make shift to live decently, though not with splendor."

The peevish tone of her voice, and impertinent manner, gave me a momentary displeasure; I suppressed my feelings however, and only replied, "Splendor is not absolutely necessary to happiness, and I hope a genteel competency with a man of your choice, will prove it to you."

She arose, and muttering some words to herself, quitted the room, leaving Miss Ellis and myself equally astonished by her communication and manner of behaviour.

I have this instant your last letter brought me; the contents have delighted me; from the moment you drew the portrait of Sir Charles Wentworth, my heart whispered me, *this is the man to make my friend happy*—heaven grant it may be so. I congratulate you on meeting with Mr. Sackville; I feel inclined to love him for his attention to you. Should your good uncle resolve to go abroad, it will be a painful determination to me, but, I will not be selfish enough to prefer my private gratification to his more valuable health. To see you previous to your setting out, will be indeed a supreme felicity. Your advice, my beloved friend, shall be strictly adhered to; but I hope I have indulged wrong ideas; if this girl marries Thurkill, surely there can be no improper attachment from another quarter; my spirits revive in that hope; pray let every thing I have written, be a profound secret. I shall address you again soon. Always my dear Mrs. Bertie,

Your truly affectionate friend,

EMILY MENVILLE.

LETTER

L E T T E R XXII.

ROBERT MARTIN, ESQ. TO JOHN CHAMBERS,
ESQ.

I RECEIVED your letter, Jack, but have not time to employ myself at present about *your* business, for my whole mind is absorbed in plots and contrivances. I have, however, spoken to Williams, who has promised me he will immediately comply with your wishes, and go to Gray's-Inn. Since I wrote you last, I have made but little progress in my amour; I ventured once to express myself rather warmly, but received such a cursed rebuff, as silenced me at once. I have however time to contrive, for she every day expects a month's confinement; you may laugh; few women in her situation are charming, but by heaven, this sweet woman grows more alluring every day, and I hope to welcome her convalescence with rapture. Colmore has absolutely made proposals to the country parson's daughter; I could hug the demure fellow for his kindness, in ridding me of an eternal Argus. Thurkill has designs on Miss Shepherd; I don't understand that business, for I am sure there is an affair between her and Menville; tant mieux, it shall go hard if I do not make that turn to my advantage, for retaliation is always allowable you know. Mary Smith is dead, I hear; what an obstinate whimpering little puss, to break her heart, rather than live the life of honour with me, who could have liked her for—a month at least. Thank heaven, there are not many such foolish damsels in this great town, or what would become
of

of honest fellows like me, who love all the sex. London fills fast; Menville's visitors are become numerous, which I am sorry for, as it lessens my opportunities of being with his lovely wife; but like the subtle serpent, I will whisper poison in her ear, and make her jealous; on that plan I found my hopes; vanity she has no share of; compliments are thrown away, but I must pique her love and pride together, and in the moment of vexation and resentment, humbly offer myself as the instrument of revenge. Glorious thought! I will pursue it. Adieu, Jack, be assured Williams will mind your affair; mean time, if a hundred pounds will be of service, my banker shall answer your draft,

Yours, sincerely,

ROBERT MARTIN.

L E T T E R XXIII.

MRS. BERTIE TO MRS. MENVILLE.

OUR route, my dear Mrs. Menville, is at last determined on; this day fortnight we set off for Spa, and on Saturday next I hope to embrace you, as we shall stay a week in town, previous to our going to the continent. Sir Charles Wentworth has declared himself in form. I have not yet given a decisive answer, but my friends will not let me be cruel, if I were inclined that way; yet he must wait a little; I shall rejoice to introduce him to you, and take your judgment, before I decide forever. Mr. Sackville and Sir Charles accom-
pany

pany us. Mr. Gaywill and his fair bride are returned. Mamma Gaywill gone off to her country seat in doleful dumps; she told my aunt, that next to her expectations of having a *titled* daughter, she should have preferred me to any woman; but a cheesemonger's offspring! heaven and earth, what a blow to ambition! *she* could not wait their arrival; but some wags here set the bells a ringing, and the bride's mother was so delighted, that she actually gave a public breakfast two days after; I am told the company was not numerous nor genteel, but however it will be a prodigious thing to talk of, that "Mrs. Hamwood gave a public breakfast in honour of her daughter's wedding." How I trifle when my heart is full of you, and every moment appears an age 'till we meet. Heaven preserve you,

CHARLOTTE BERTIE.

L E T T E R XXIV.

CAPTAIN HARLEY TO MISS ELLIS.

A THOUSAND thanks to my dear Miss Ellis for her obliging letters. 'Tis not possible for you to conceive the transport I feel at the sight of your hand. Yet I sometimes open your epistles with an anxiety which hardly permits me to break the seal. But "you are all well and happy;" thank Heaven. 'Tis the first wish of my heart, that those I love better than myself should enjoy felicity.

Some time ago, when the unfortunate Colonel B——bequeathed me such a considerable addition to my fortune, it afforded me no satisfaction;

I rec.

I regretted that it came too late to procure me happiness, and could scarcely believe it possible riches should for one moment give me real transport. I was mistaken. I adore that providence which has placed me in a situation to befriend the unfortunate. I bless the generous donor, whose bequest has given me the power to make others happy. O! my sweet friend, I have a tale of woe to unfold, which, but for the reflection that it now no longer exists, I should forbear to wound your feelings, by the repetition of such cruel sorrows.

About eight days since, I was taking a solitary ramble by the side of the lake, when I observed a little boy, who appeared about nine or ten years of age, sitting on a low bank some distance from the common path-way, with his head leaning on his hand, and in an attitude of sorrow. I walked up to him. The tears were streaming from his eyes. I spoke: he lifted up his head, and discovered to me the most interesting countenance I had ever seen, pale and emaciated with the traces of sorrow and misery in every feature. "My good boy," said I, in French, "from what cause arises your grief?"

He answered me faintly in English, "I do not understand you, Sir."

Delighted at finding a young countryman, I took his hand; "My young friend, tell me, are you ill? or why are you crying?"

"Yes, Sir," he replied, "I am ill enough, but my poor mother and sisters are worse than me; my father, I hope, is in heaven."

"Your father and mother! Tell me," cried I, eagerly, "where do you live?"

"In the wood, Sir."

"Shew

“ Shew me the way directly. I will be their friend.”

The boy looked frightened at my earnest manner, but rose immediately, and with feeble steps conducted me to the wood. His weakness would not permit him to keep pace with my impatience. I asked him why he came to the lake?

“ Because, Sir, I could not bear to see my father dead, and my mother dying. I came out to beg bread, but I had not strength to reach the town, so I thought I might as well lie down, and die too.”

This artless tale affected me greatly. In a short time we came to the thickest part of the wood, where I saw a little hovel, not much better than our cow-houses. I desired the child to go in before, and prepare them to expect me. I followed. Good Heaven! what a scene presented itself: never shall I forget it, nor can description do it justice. In the upper part of this room, if it can be called such, or rather stable, extended on some straw, lay the form of a man, to all appearance dead, or dying: a woman on her knees, almost without motion, her face joined to his. At a little distance, on the bare ground, sat two lovely, though emaciated, and almost naked little girls, one not more than six years old, the other about eight. Their tears and cries wrung my very heart.

“ Here is the gentleman, mother,” said the boy.

She raised her languid head. But, good God! such a look; such significance of woe, despair, and misery, I never beheld. *She* could not speak:

Speak: it was with difficulty I could articulate my words.

"I beg your pardon, , Madam. I come, if you will permit me, to speak peace and comfort."

"Peace and comfort!" she exclaimed, and her head dropped in its former position.

I was distressed beyond measure. Not one of those young creatures had strength to go so far as the town, or my house. I had some salts with me: I advanced to the unhappy woman. "Smell to this bottle, Madam; try its effects on your husband. I will fly to procure you cordials and assistance."

She took the bottle in her trembling hand, stared eagerly in my face, but spoke not. I run out of the wretched place; and my own house being nearest, soon reached it. I got some wine and biscuits, some lavender, and ordered my two servants to follow with bed-clothes, and such necessaries as they could bring, and were immediately wanted. My horse being got ready, I was almost instantly back to the wood, though obliged to fasten the animal some distance from the cottage, as the wood was too thick for him to penetrate. On my entrance I found all the children round their wretched parent: he had shewn some signs of life. I advanced, and with a tea-spoon put a little wine into his mouth four or five times: it revived him. I soaked some biscuits, and made the mother and children take them: they eat eagerly, but spoke not a word. The man now opened his eyes; his wife put a bit of biscuit into his mouth, but it was with difficulty he got it down. However, in about ten minutes, all of them appeared a little revived, and were capable of taking some refreshment;
for

for I gave it but in small quantities. The poor mother was the first who broke the affecting silence: she grasped my hand with *her* poor emaciated one.

"Angel!" said she, "blessed angel! you have saved us all!"

She burst into a flood of tears. I rejoiced to see them; they gave ease to a heart overloaded with grief.

"Be comforted, dear Madam; weakness and sorrow have reduced you to this unhappy situation. Thank God, I have the power and inclination to relieve you from both. Has your husband any particular disorder?"

"Oh, no; 'tis grief, poverty, and want of food: but tell me, are you an Englishman?"

"I *am*, Madam, your countryman, your friend."

She clasped her feeble hands in thankfulness to Heaven, and then gave the poor man some more biscuit. The sweet children kissed my hand; the boy flung his about my neck, almost drowned in tears.

"O! my father will not die, my dear mother will live! O! what good luck I should meet such a kind gentleman!"

My heart was deeply affected; the sensations I felt cannot be described. During this scene my servants arrived with the necessaries I had ordered. What additional joy! I got a bed made up in another corner for the sick man, and assisted my servants to remove him into it. He fainted with the fatigue, but soon recovered, and appeared sensible of the pleasing change. The straw was removed, and another bed made in its place for the children. I ordered one of the servants to go into the town for more food,

food, and bid one of the maids come with him to stay that night with this distressed family, resolving, if they could be removed the following day, to prepare rooms for them in my own house.

Some narrow minds might have suggested that guilt or shame had driven them here to perish ; frigid caution might have whispered suspicion of dishonesty and unworthiness ; but the heart of a Briton is always open to compassion and humanity : they were miserable, and almost starving : another day, and all might have been over ; the father and mother dead ; the poor children wandering in the woods, without sustenance or clothes. O ! my friend, judge of my transports, to have the power of preventing such fatal events, to see the dim eyes of the parents running over with tears of joy, to see those dear objects of their care kissing and exulting with each other, then crying out, " O ! the dear gentleman ! See that dear gentleman, who has made our father and mother alive again ! " Never, no, never was joy equal to what I felt."

It was three days, however, before the family could be removed, and then they were accommodated in my house with convenience ; every requisite article was provided for them ; and 'tis scarcely possible to conceive the alterations in their persons. The poor sick man looked quite the gentleman ; and his wife had an air of respectability and fashion about her, which was really interesting. My friend Clayton was greatly taken with them, and very fond of the children, who are beautiful and engaging in their manners. They had been in the house five days before I would permit them to talk of their affairs ; but the sixth, when Clayton and I called in to pay
our

our morning compliments, the gentleman requested we would be seated.

"I can never, Sir, sufficiently bless the kind Providence," said he, addressing himself to me, "which threw my poor boy in the way of your observation, nor can the feelings of a grateful and much-obliged heart tell you what I feel every hour for your unbounded goodness."

I was going to speak.

"Permit me, Sir, to go on. I know what you would say; but I must judge from facts. *You* have preserved *me* from death; *you* have rescued *my wife* from despair and misery; *you* have fed, have clothed *my little ones*, who must otherwise have perished with cold and hunger. Can benefits like these fail to impress a mind of sensibility with everlasting gratitude! No, Sir; whilst this heart, which you have warmed, has power to beat, it will be deeply sensible of kindness as unexpected as unexampled. With a liberality and candour, known only to honest, generous minds, you have relieved me without knowing if the objects of your bounty were deserving or worthless. 'Tis my duty now to be explicit in every circumstance of my life."

I interrupted him. "Be assured, Sir, we have no idle or impertinent curiosity; and if, as from your situation in the wood we may suppose to be the case, you have any painful circumstances, any incidents which must distress you in the relation, let me entreat you to suppress them, and think only at present of the pleasure we shall experience in seeing you and your family restored to health."

"To sympathizing minds, like your's," answered he, "I may give pain; but it becomes my character to leave no doubts in the bosom of
my

my benefactor ; if, therefore, you will spare me an hour after dinner, or any time you are most at leisure, you will add to those favours you so liberally confer."

We promised to attend him after dinner, and kept our word. He then addressed us in the following words :

' My name is Neville ; I am descended from a younger branch of that honourable family in England. My father was a clergyman, with a living of three hundred pounds a year. A marriage with a worthy young woman, who had no fortune, disoblged all his relations. Within six years after this union he had five children. He now found his income very insufficient to support and educate such a family, yet both he and my mother were economical. I was intended for the church. My brother William early discovered a predilection for the navy : at thirteen he went on board a man of war as a midshipman. I pursued my studies with my father ; and from being constantly his companion, acquired a gravity of disposition and deportment which made me appear older than I really was, and gave me consequence in the neighbourhood.

' I was about nineteen, when a baronet in our parish made me an offer of attending his son abroad as a tutor. Youthful as I was, he thought me capable of the charge, though the young gentleman was within one year of my age. The Baronet assured my father he would amply provide for me : a living was in his gift of five hundred pounds a year ; a very old incumbent possessed it ; and that should certainly be reserved for me at his death. Offers so liberal could not be rejected. I was introduced to the

Baronet's,

Baronet's family, which consisted of two daughters (whom I had never seen but at church) and the son. The younger of the ladies engaged my attention greatly; there was a softness, and elegance in her manners, that charmed me; every succeeding visit added to the prepossession, and when the hour of our departure came, I felt inexpressible tortures. I was compelled to leave the lovely Lucy, without daring to disclose my passion, and without a single hope ever to call her mine. Grief and despair took possession of my soul, and my worthy parents imputed my sorrow to the love and affection I had for my family. We went to France, to Italy; and Mr. Summers treated me with extraordinary kindness. He heard frequently from his sisters, and I was always mentioned with regard. Time and the impossibility (I thought of ever gaining the object of my wishes, subdued in some degree the anxiety which had long preyed on my mind. My companion was desirous of going to Venice: I had no objection. In an evil hour we entered that city: it was the carnival time, when every degree of licentiousness was permitted, I may say invited. Mr. Summers entered into every amusement with an eagerness I had never before witnessed; for though his conduct had been now and then a little irregular, yet he behaved with decency, and appeared to wish me unacquainted with it; as there had been nothing very atrocious in his actions, I was unwilling to lose my consequence with him by ill-natured observations.

' About a week after our arrival at Venice, I lost much of his company; he had separate engagements, in which I was not invited to partake

partake. He once or twice was absent the whole night. I grew very uneasy, and employed our servant to find out where those nights were spent, though I was hurt at having recourse to such means. I was soon informed he was warmly attached to a beautiful courtesan. I was by no means pleased with this intelligence, yet I looked upon it as a less evil than associating with men of infamous characters; the carnival would soon be over, and our stay short: I therefore endeavoured to reconcile myself to what I could not prevent.

‘ One evening, which I was spending at the house of a gentleman to whom we had been recommended, a person came in, and said there had been a great riot at the house of a famous courtesan, and he heard a gentleman was killed. A cold shiver seized me, though I knew not why; but hastily apologizing for my absence, I ran home; and in a few minutes poor Summers was brought in dangerously wounded. He opened his eyes on my exclamations, and feebly said, “ ’Tis all over. Forgive me, dear Charles. Tell——”

‘ He could say no more, but closed his lips for ever.

‘ You may suppose how dreadful must have been my situation. I could gain little information; the courtesan was fled; the company in the house was not known, having put on masks, and mixed with the crowd. You are no strangers, I presume, to the difficulties a foreigner has to encounter under circumstances such as I have related. However, by the assistance of friends I got thro’ them; the body was interred, and I prepared for my journey home, oppressed with sorrow. I wrote to my father, and requested

quested he would break the melancholy news to Sir Thomas Summers. Alas! I little conceived the shock I was soon to sustain. On my arrival in England, I hastened to the parsonage, having previously written from Dover. When I came to the house, a maid-servant in mourning opened the door as the chaise drew up. I shuddered; but jumping out, enquired how all the family did.

"My mistress and the two young Misses are poorly enough, God knows," said she.

"My father, how is my father?"

"Lord, Sir, why my master and Miss Charlotte are both dead in the small pox."

"I heard no more; my senses fled; and on recovery I found my mother and two eldest sisters weeping over me. The scene that followed will not bear repetition. I was soon informed poor Charlotte had caught the small pox; and my father, not knowing but he had had them, was constantly with her. It turned out a putrid sort, and both fell a sacrifice to that horrid malady. Myself and the two elder ones had it in our infancy: but neither of my parents approved of inoculation.

"I found the successor to my father had given my mother notice to leave the house. From our income nothing had been saved. The household furniture was all we could call our own.

"The following morning I sent a card to Sir Thomas, with an account of his son's effects and my expences: I could not then see him. My whole attention was taken up in what manner to dispose of my mother and sisters; our little all could not exceed two hundred pounds: I was without the power of adding to it. The promise which Sir Thomas Summers had made

me I looked upon as very doubtful, now, the tie which bound us together was broken, and at best it was a distant prospect. However, as at all events, we were obliged to quit the house, I could not bear my mother should receive a second summons. I therefore went to a farmer's in the neighbourhood, to procure board for the present, determined to remove in a day or two at farthest.

‘ The second morning after I had wrote to Sir Thomas, I received a message, desiring to see me at the Park. I obeyed with a fluttering heart: I had a father's sorrows to encounter, and perhaps the lovely Lucy's tears. When I was conducted to the library my heart was very full; the emotions of the unhappy parent soon overcame the little resolution I could boast: we both wept as we embraced. 'Tis needless to repeat our conversation. Indeed, I fear you are already tired with this tedious preface to my misfortunes. After some time, we grew more composed. He requested I would spend the day with him, and led me into his daughter's dressing room. Our meeting was truly melancholy: I was received and treated as a brother.

‘ After dinner Sir Thomas enquired into the situation of my family. I frankly told him our difficulties. He was much affected, and mused for some time. At length he said, “If Mrs. Neville would not be offended at the offer, I should be very happy to make my house her future residence.”

“ And Miss Neville's, my dear papa,” cried Lucy, “ would be delightful companions for us.”

“ Well then,” said Sir Thomas, “ make the proposal, Mr. Neville, and assure your mother I shall

shall think myself obliged by her acceptance of it ; and for you, my young friend, something must be thought of another time."

' Deeply impressed with gratitude for kindness I so little expected, I took leave of this worthy family. As I parted from the Baronet, he put a bit of paper into my hand. " Accept that," said he, " till something better is done."

' It was a bank note for three hundred pounds.—On my return to my mother, I related what had passed : she sighed deeply.

" I do not think, my dear son, I ought to be a burthen on you ; much less can I consent to live a dependant. Sir Thomas does not want a house-keeper ; his daughters have long superintended in his family ; therefore my situation there would be a state of obligation I am unable to support. I have this day heard of a lady who wants a person as a house-keeper, and whom she might consider as a companion : this will suit me ; and I have requested application to be made about it. Your sisters are desirous of going as teachers into some good schools, and I approve their intention. I think Sir Thomas himself must applaud our resolution, not to be useless burthens on our friends."

' Although my mother's words pained me to my very soul, yet I could not blame her determination. My sisters were lovely girls, particularly the eldest, now near eighteen ; the other a year younger. Fanny was tall, elegantly made, a clear complexion of the brunette kind, and most expressive countenance : she was sensibility itself ; alas ! too much so. Eliza, the youngest, was rather short of her age, but delicate, and a pretty lively countenance, with great vivacity in her disposition.

‘ The next day I thought it my duty to wait on Sir Thomas, and related what had passed between my mother and self.

“ If your mother could not find her own happiness here, far be it from me to urge it. She is a truly-respectable woman ; but she must consider my house so far her home, that should the situation she chuses at any time prove disagreeable, she will instantly leave it and come with us, till she meets with something more eligible. Meantime, I insist upon it, that your sisters spend two or three months with my girls, and we will look about for them.”

‘ To these kind offers I acceded with many thanks that flowed from a grateful heart ; and in short, in less than a fortnight my mother was settled agreeably with Lady Marston, my sisters at the Park, our effects disposed of, and I had my residence at the farmer’s, till I could obtain some situation suitable to my talents and inclinations.

‘ I was now a constant visitor at the Park. A long-stifled flame again burst out ; and the charming Lucy was dearer to me than ever. Conscious of the impossibility that my passion should ever be rewarded, I had no remedy but absence : I therefore made all possible enquiries for a similar situation to the one I had lost. During this time two gentlemen came on a visit to Sir Thomas, Mr. Harlowe and Mr. Binmore, men of fashion and large fortunes. I very soon observed the former was attached to Lucy ; and the latter paid more than common attention to my sister Frances. Jealousy, and the duty of a brother, made me a close observer. I was not pleased, and therefore took an opportunity of speaking to my sister. She blushed, and answered

swered me, I thought, very coolly. I was hurt, and was casting about in what way to remove her from the house, when an accident happened that made an entire change in our affairs. Sir Thomas, and his guests went out one morning a hunting party; the former, in leaping a gate, was thrown from his horse, and dangerously hurt. He was brought home, but only lived three days. A few hours before he expired, he called me and his daughter Lucy to his bed-side. "I have seen the struggle between love and honour; and perhaps, had I lived, might have entertained different views for my child, and have wished you at a distance; but now, to give her an honest, worthy man, who can support her decently, is all I wish for. Lucy has five thousand pounds: you must soon come into possession of the living, which is secured to you. If, therefore, you love each other, Heaven grant you may be happy."

"Our emotions cannot be described. I fell on my knees; Lucy did the same.

"Shall I join your hands, my children? Speak freely, Lucy."

"Without raising her head, she gave me her hand, and faintly said, "Your wishes are mine, my dearest father."

"My joy, my transport was inexpressible, and only checked by the scene before me. He endeavoured to exert his strength, and went on, "My estate goes to my nephew. This house and land I purchased; it is left by my will jointly between my daughters; but I believe—"

"Here his strength, his voice failed him, he grew convulsed, his daughters were led out of the room, and I remained till he breathed no more.

more. The gentlemen visitors of course left the house.

‘ Mr. Summers, now Sir William Summers, came over to make his claim, which was soon settled; and we very quickly observed a growing partiality between him and Miss Summers. This was by far the happiest period of my life: my mother happily settled, my Lucy soon to be mine for ever, and my sisters, at her request, to reside with us. In short, not to tire you, in less than eight months after the Baronet’s death, Sir William Summers married his cousin, and I was united to her sister. The former generously gave up his claim to his share of the house, &c. until I should come into possession of the living, which happened about three months after; when the house was let, and we took possession of the parsonage, a delightful spot, and only three miles from Sir William’s. We lived in the greatest harmony for three years, when all my happiness was blasted for ever by two fatal and horrid events. I had for some days observed my wife looked ill and was low-spirited; to my anxious enquiries she only pleaded her situation, being young with child, (we had already a boy and girl), and I sought to amuse her by every method I could devise, supposing that to be really the case.

‘ One evening I was walking in a little shrubbery behind the house, when I thought I heard my sister Frances speak low, and was answered by a man equally in as low a tone. Curiosity, or rather affection, impelled me to listen; but, great God! what were my feelings when I discovered, by the conversation, the gentleman to be Mr. Binmore, (who, I should have told you, had some time before visited at our brother’s,
but

but did not appear to retain any of that partiality he had before shewn to my sister, and therefore I retained no suspicions of him.) The wretched girl said enough to convince me she was undone by the villain, who pleaded his father's pride and avarice as an excuse to evade marrying her for the present, but strongly solicited she would soon follow him to town, and he would provide her with every accommodation: 'My friend,' added he, (which friend, I thought; was Harlowe,) 'will assist you in getting off and; have a post-chaise ready to convey you to London.'

'I heard no more: that instant one of the servants came running up, crying out, his mistress was ill. Almost lifeless, I flew to my Lucy, whom I found just recovered from a fainting fit. The anguish of my mind cannot be expressed. Eliza was with my wife, who grew better. I asked how long she had been ill, and was informed immediately after Sir William Summers had left her. I did not know of his being at my house. I now enquired after Fanny: she soon made her appearance, and then I saw conscious guilt in her face. I shrunk from her sight; and leading my Lucy to her dressing-room, entreated her to go to bed. She readily complied with my request. I could not return to the parlour: I was distracted. I went to my study; I wrote a note to Mr Binmore, requesting he would meet me the following evening at the bottom of the shrubbery, on particular business. This note I ordered a servant to carry early in the morning, as I knew not but he might set off for London. I retired to bed, but not to sleep: my wife was equally restless. I began to suspect she knew something of

the affair, but I did not chuse to question her. We passed a wretched night. She said, however, that she was much better. I could not bear the presence of Frances till I had seen Binmore, and therefore went out to dine with a friend, having previously received an answer from Binmore that he would attend me.

‘ In the evening I repaired to the spot, where he soon made his appearance. My blood was on fire. I very concisely told him I had been a witness to his conversation the preceding day, and demanded that he should instantly make my sister his wife. I cannot repeat to you the insulting answer he made me. I called him an unprincipled villain. He repeated the word; and drawing a brace of pistols from his pocket, offered one to me, and bade me forget my cloth and meet him, man to man, or he would brand me for a coward, and my sister for a ——. Enraged beyond the power of any consideration to withhold me, I snatched the pistol; and both firing the same instant, my shot entered his breast, and he fell with a heavy groan. Repentance and horror seized me at once. I ran to him. With another groan he expired. My distress was inconceivable: like a mad-man I flew to the house, without considering consequences, and went up the back-stairs to my apartment, that I might not meet my wife or sisters; but just as I was stealing by Lucy’s dressing-room, I thought I heard her voice, as if in tears, and presently a man’s saying, “ You preach in vain; nothing shall deter me from my purpose.”

‘ I burst open the door. My wife was on her knees to Sir William Summers; he held both her hands.

“ What, what is all this ?” cried I.

‘ She

‘ She instantly swooned. He turned furiously to me.

“ Well, Sir, and what explanation do you demand ?”

“ I demand,” cried I, eagerly, “ to know why I found my wife in such a posture *before you ?*”

“ Another time, when I am better prepared,” answered he, “ you shall know.”

‘ He attempted to leave the room. I caught his arm. “ You shall not leave me in uncertainty.”

“ *Shall not !*” he repeated in the highest rage, and attempted to strike me. I avoided the blow by stepping aside ; and giving him a violent push, he fell with great force against the corner of my wife’s wardrobe. At that moment she began to shew signs of life ; and my two sisters and a servant, alarmed by the voices and noise, came into the room. Frances instantly screamed, and flew out of the apartment ; the servant ran to take up Sir William ; whilst I flung myself into a chair, without life or motion. He was conveyed senseless to a bed, and a surgeon sent for. My wife, as she recovered, held out her hand to me : I took it, pressed, and kissed it. Eliza prevailed on her to be put to bed. She was too ill to resist or speak. The events of this last hour were like a horrid dream. I knew not what course to take : I was lost in conjecture, and overwhelmed with misery.

When the surgeon came, I attended him to Sir William’s room : he was alive. The surgeon examined his head. ‘Twas all over ; the skull was fractured, and death inevitable. He attempted to speak, but could not ; his agitation was great : he pointed at me two or three times.

I saw the surgeon eyed me with suspicion ; but before I could speak, a servant came into the room, crying out, " Lord, Sir, Mr. Binmore is found murdered in our shrubbery !"

" The agitation of my mind now overcame me : I fell on the floor. When I returned to life, the surgeon, my sister, and servant were with me. I could not bear to see them. I groaned most dreadfully. My sister and the servant were ordered to leave the room. The surgeon said, " The calamities of this night are so horrible, that I cannot express what I feel. I am persuaded, if you *are* concerned, if you *are* accessory to what has happened, you are innocently so ; but the world may judge otherwise, and your safety must be provided for. Trust me with your secret, Sir : on my faith and honour you may rely."

" As well as my distraction would permit, I related faithfully what had passed. The surgeon was extremely shocked.

" You are indeed unfortunate, but not, I think, guilty. The circumstance of your writing to Binmore is the only one that can appear against you. Sir William's death may be attributed to accident. I will examine Binmore's body, and see if your note is about him."

" The worthy man left me with trembling steps. I went to my wife's apartment. she was recovered, and in tears ; I was glad to see them.

" O, my dear husband," she cried, " what will become of us !"

" I prest her to my bosom, and entreated an explanation of the scene in which I found her. With evident reluctance, and much confusion,

fusion; she acknowledged, that for above three months past Sir William Summers had declared a violent passion for her; that the horror which she expressed he only laughed at; that she found he was a libertine in every sense of the word; and, although he had so long imposed upon us by his apparent sobriety, she was informed, he had since his marriage seduced two girls in the neighbouring village, and had been guilty of the grossest enormities. Feeling the utmost detestation, it was with great difficulty she could bring herself to behave decently to him in our company; and she took the utmost precaution to avoid being alone with him; but, by some means or other, he always knew when she was so, and never failed to visit her, and urge his guilty passion. Since the visit of Mr. Binmore, he had been more importunate, and had even the audacity to propose her going off with him to France. She said she now threatened him with her determination to acquaint me of his baseness. Desperate at this, he swore bitterly, that if, by any word or look of mine, he discovered she had put her menaces into execution, that instant should be the last of my life, though his own death was the immediate consequence. Terrified by his wickedness, she was obliged to keep the fatal secret.

‘ This day, after tea, he came up to her dressing-room: my sister Fanny was with her: she left the room on some occasion, and then he told her he was determined to be fooled no longer: she should accompany him abroad, and have an agreeable companion of her own sex whom she could not object to; that he hated his wife and me to so violent a degree, that if she refused, he was resolved to murder both,

and

and fly, never to return, having taken all necessary precautions as to money matters. It was then she flung herself on her knees to him.

"You kneel in vain," said the monster. "My friend Binmore has perhaps by this time done your husband's business; but that is not now my concern."

She again renewed her entreaties.

"You preach in vain," cried he; "nothing shall deter me from my purpose."

Those were the words I heard when I burst open the door. You may easily conceive, gentlemen, my astonishment, that such atrocious crimes could have existence, much less in the bosom of a man I esteemed as a friend and brother. Before I had time to comfort my poor unhappy Lucy, the surgeon came in. "Sir," said he, "you must leave the house directly; no time is to be lost: come with me immediately; I pledge myself for your safety, and will take care of this lady."

My wife was in a state of madness. He dragged me away, giving Eliza a charge to watch over her till his return. Taking me down the back-stairs to the stable, where his horse stood saddled, "Mount instantly," said he; "make the best of your way to Dover; get safe into France, and then write under cover to Mr. Grafton, Surgeon, London, who will forward it to me."

I mounted the horse without speaking. The generous man put his purse into my pocket, and I set off with all the speed I could. The darkness of the night favoured my escape: at five in the morning I arrived at Dover, and fortunately found a packet ready to sail within

two hours. The hurry of my spirits precluded my being sensible of fatigue, or the want of refreshment. I was soon called on board, and in a few hours safely landed at Calais, where I took a bit of bread, drank a glass of wine, and proceeded on my journey to Boulogne. Almost instantly as I alighted, I fainted. The people of the inn very humanely put me to bed, and sent for an apothecary, who let me blood, and in all probability saved my life, for I had a raging fever, which flew to my head, and for two days I was insensible to every thing. A naturally-good constitution, and the attention I experienced from the medical gentleman who attended me, restored me to reason, and a sense of the bitter misfortunes that had so recently befallen myself and family.

I now recollected with terror the manner in which my sister Frances run out of the room, that she had never appeared afterwards, and the situation of the poor unhappy girl, the misery of my Lucy, and the distraction of my mother and Lady Summers, altogether formed such a scene of horror to my view, that I could have welcomed death with pleasure. I wrote from Boulogne, determined to wait there for an answer, which it was eleven days before I received, a prey to the deepest remorse, for the death of two men who, however infamous, ought not to have fallen by my hands, and were indeed very unfit to die; the anxiety I felt for my family, and the uncertainty of my future destination, were objects of such terror to my mind, that when the long wished-for letter came, I could hardly find steadiness in my fingers to open it. Nearly as I can remember the contents were these:

“ When

“ When the Doctor had seen me safe off from the house, he returned to the room, where the body of Mr. Binmore lay, brought in by the servants. He had previously examined the pockets; my note was not there. He was considering in what manner to break the affair to Lady Summers, when a number of people burst into the house, with a constable, demanding me to be given up to them. Struck with surprise, he asked what they meant, and from whom they had received such vile intelligence. The constable told him from my own servant, who had given the alarm in the village, and said I had sent him with a note, to decoy Mr. Binmore to the shrubbery, and afterwards to get Sir William there, because I wanted to force Mr. Binmore to marry my sister, and was jealous of the other with my wife.”

“ Improbable as this story might appear, from the whole tenor of my life, and my sacred character, yet the villain’s story made an impression on the villagers, and with the constable, as a screen to their curiosity, they proceeded to the house, demanding to see the bodies, and to have me in custody. My friend, to gain time, told them I was with my wife; that they should fasten all the doors and windows to prevent my escape, told some of them to watch below, whilst he took others up to see Sir William’s body: by these means he gained time. Secure, as they thought, of my person, their reverence for my character and for my wife returned, and they very readily agreed it would be cruel to separate us, whilst Madam was so very ill.

“ About three hours after my departure, however, when they were all seated comfortably in the kitchen, they were alarmed by the
noise

of a carriage; and when the door was opened, in rushed Lady Summers with an air of wildness, demanding to see Mr. and Mrs. Neville. The Doctor, Mr. Wellford, conducted her to my wife's room: she, wishing to exculpate me, and desirous of concealing Sir William's depravity, declared he had entangled his foot in the carpet, and fell against the wardrobe. As this could not be contradicted, poor Lady Summers regretted only the premature death of her husband at first, but recollecting Mr. Binmore, "Ah!" said she, "but how came Binmore to be murdered in your shrubbery, and where is Mr. Neville?"

' Unable to answer those questions, poor Lucy burst into tears; and being accustomed to speak the simple truth, she at last confessed the whole affair to her sister, who, overcome with sorrow and mortification, fell almost senseless on her bed, when Eliza came into the room, demanding to know what was become of Frances, as she was no where to be found. Both ladies, unacquainted with any particular relative to her, were equally ignorant and surprised at the question. Every room, every avenue and garden, was searched in vain: poor Fanny was not to be found, (and from that hour to this I never could learn her fate, or whether she is dead or alive.)

' My friend added, that, from what motives he could not explore, my own servant had given notice to Mr. Binmore's friends of the murder: that my gown was to be taken from me; and the living decreed to be in the gift of Lady Summers, who had already declared she should appoint my curate; and, from reasons he could not account for, seemed absolutely to have

have withdrawn herself from my family. Mr. Binmore's uncle had come down, and breathed nothing but revenge and prosecution against me as a murderer, the note I sent his nephew being found by Lady Summers, and delivered to him. My friend concluded by requesting I would seek out a safe and comfortable habitation, on the first notice of which my Lucy and her children would join me."

' This letter, you may suppose, added no small distress to what I already suffered. To be proscribed, to lose my living, to be stigmatized as an assassin, to have my gown taken from me, and banished my native country, (for I had no witnesses to prove my innocence as to intention,) all these melancholy considerations crowded on my mind, and rendered me the most miserable of men. Added to this was another painful circumstance: the five thousand pounds which Sir Thomas Summers left to each of his daughters, had been at the request of Sir William left with him, to pay some purchases, and for which he paid me five per cent.; but I had only a simple acknowledgment to shew for it, and *that* I left in a bureau, that stood in my library. I wrote immediately to Mr. Wellford, requesting he would search this bureau, with my wife, and have advice what steps were necessary to be pursued to secure the property. I resolved to stay at Boulogne until my wife joined me; for, as to returning to England, with a character so infamous, and under circumstances so reproachable, I could not bear the idea of. I wrote to my dear Lucy and to my mother. The uncertainty of poor Fanny's fate was terrible, a thousand times worse than a knowledge of her death could be; but I still hoped to hear that she

she had fled to her mother at Lady Marston's. I soon heard from my friends, alas! dreadful was the intelligence! Lady Summers had joined Binmore's family in a prosecution, which must preclude all hopes of a return, had I been inclined. The bureau had been examined; no such paper as I described could be found; Lady Summers denied any knowledge of the five thousand pounds being left with her husband; she refused to see her sister, and behaved with the greatest barbarity. Mr. Wellford still proved a friend: he assisted my wife in disposing of her effects, and requested she would reside at his house till she could join me. Lady Marston had the goodness to send for my sister Eliza to live with her and my mother, who was in a most deplorable state of health, from her distress of mind. The good, the generous Wellford sold every thing to the best advantage, promising that nothing should be wanting on his part to discover my lost paper, and oblige Lady Summers to do me justice.

' In less than a month my poor dear Lucy joined me, with her two children, and about three hundred and forty pounds; this was our all. I will not describe our meeting: I cannot even now think of it without emotion. I had, when abroad with Mr. Summers, spent near a month at Geneva. I liked the country and the people; there I determined to reside.

' We left Boulogne, after writing our friends, and arrived, without meeting any accident, at Geneva. I placed my money in the hands of a banker, and tried to get some employ to teach English, the dead languages, writing, &c. In a short time I had a few pupils, and for about four years lived decently, though happiness could never

never return. During this period my mother died; my friend, Mr. Wellford, had become a widower, and married my sister Eliza; Lady Summers had espoused the gentleman to whom she had given my living till her son came of age. No traces of any acknowledgment for the five thousand pounds could be found, and therefore all hope of a restitution was totally given up.

‘About six months ago, the banker, in whose hands I placed my money, which was now reduced to less than two hundred pounds, failed for an immense sum. The intelligence was like a thunder-bolt. What was now to become of my Lucy and her children! I was seized with a violent fever; it proved of the putrid kind. My pupils were all taken away. Heaven in its mercy spared my wife and children from the infection. For some time my life was despaired of. When the crisis was past, and the disorder abated, I found almost every little thing of value we had my poor wife had parted with to support me. Our prospects were dreadful. Weak and ill as I continued, I made application for my former pupils. No. “The house was infectious, I was incapable of my duty, and they were otherwise disposed of.”

‘Thus cut off from every assistance, we sold the little that was left, and, with the amount of about four pounds, I resolved to reach some village, and try my fortune there. Slowly and painfully I quitted the town. We entered this wood: I could walk no farther. With extreme difficulty my wife got me to the hut you found me in. Here the fever fell on my nerves: a total debility succeeded, which for near six weeks kept me hovering between life and death. By
this

this time our money was nearly expended, as my wife spared no expence to support me. I was not yet able to travel; my poor Lucy, with grief and abstinence, was reduced to a shadow; and another fortnight left us without the means of procuring any thing but bread and water. This miserable situation brought on my former weakness: I could no longer stand. I expected to see the dear objects round me perish with want. I then, from desperation, grew resigned: I prayed we might all die together, as a less evil than to leave them behind. For two days we had only three small cakes between us: indeed I was incapable of partaking. Hunger drove my poor boy out, it seems, to beg for bread: and in that hour it pleased the Almighty to guide the steps of the most generous and humane of mankind to the spot where faintness compelled my poor child to rest himself.

‘Blessed God,’ added Mr. Neville, folding his hands with fervour, ‘I adore thy divine Providence. Thou hast given power to the generous heart; thou hast sent thy worthy instrument of mercy to preserve a valuable woman and her dear infants from the grave.

‘Oh, Sir,’ addressing me, ‘men like you find in their own feelings, in the conscious rectitude of their own hearts, more real gratification than the most eloquent acknowledgments can bestow. No language can do justice to the sensibility of my soul.’

I interrupted him. “You judge right, Sir, in supposing I am more than rewarded for the little service I have been so fortunate to render you, in seeing you and your amiable family so much recovered. Henceforth consider us as
your

your brothers, and your children as ours.

Without waiting for a reply, which indeed he was unable to make, from his strong emotions, we quitted the room, commenting on his extraordinary and shocking story. Clayton said he remembered, some years back, seeing it in the papers, that a clergyman had murdered his brother and friend, and fled to the Continent.

Thus, my dear Miss Ellis, I have related pretty faithfully, Mr. Neville's misfortunes, as I committed the story to paper the same day. I have the pleasure to say he is now quite well, though anxious to get into some way of providing for his family. This, we tell him, must be our business. Mrs. Neville is a most amiable woman, both in person and mind; the children doat on us. In short, I have felt more calm satisfaction, more resignation and content within my bosom these last three weeks, than ever I expected to feel again. Ah! what a blessing is riches, when it enables us to assist our less fortunate fellow-creatures!

I hope my future letters will be of a less melancholy cast, and that those you honour me with may contribute to my peace; for whilst those I love and revere are happy, I cannot be miserable. Adieu, dearest Miss Ellis,

Your ever obliged,

FREDERIC HARLEY.

LETTER.

L E T T E R XXV.

MRS. BERTIE TO MISS ELLIS.

WITHIN three hours, my dear Miss Ellis, I bid adieu to London, with a heart deeply impressed with sorrow for the situation in which I leave my dearest friend. Oh! what were my emotions when I beheld that lovely face (for lovely she must ever be) clouded, and struggling to appear cheerful and happy. Good heavens! what depravity in the hearts of some men; what a difference between that pert, insignificant girl, Miss Shepherd, and the amiable, the charming Mrs. Menville. Yet I see plainly the coquette is preferred, and my sweet friend neglected. My heart is bursting with indignation; and it was with the utmost difficulty I could keep my temper within bounds.

To you, my dear Miss Ellis, I bequeath my interest in her affairs during my absence. Oh! “watch her with a care like mine,” soften her sorrows, and if possible bring her unworthy husband to value the treasure he possesses.

Either I am much mistaken, or her father is not so blinded as she hopes for; yet I blame not him so much as her good-for-nothing uncle. But I will not dwell on the subject. My motive for writing you now is, to entreat the favour of your correspondence during her confinement. Heaven grant her a safe recovery. I feel a thousand pangs at being obliged to leave England at this time; but the obligations I owe to my uncle and aunt will not admit of an alternative. Pray,
therefore,

therefore, write me every thing and about every body ; and may felicity attend you and my beloved friend, prays

CHARLOTTE BERTIE.

L E T T E R XXVI.

MRS. MENVILLE TO MRS. BERTIE.

HOW quickly flew those hours of happiness I enjoyed in the company of my dear Mrs. Bertie! fled, perhaps, never to return. Ah! what can compensate for the loss of such a friend? but I will not murmur nor repine; I will be thankful for the good I enjoy, and bear inevitable evils with patience. Miss Ellis is good and affectionate, she will not unite herself to Mr. Colemore, 'till my expected confinement is over, and I am selfish enough to accept of the sacrifice at his expence. Mr. Menville told me last night, every thing was in forwardness for Miss Shepherd's marriage with Mr. Thurkill; a house had been taken that day in Manchester-Square, and I should be desired to go and look at it in a day or two, when the furniture was put in. He surprised me greatly, by saying old Shepherd gave his daughter ten thousand pounds; I had no idea the man could have spared half the money; Miss Ellis is equally astonished. Mrs. Shepherd comes up in a few days, and the week after next the wedding takes place; it has been managed secretly and suddenly I think, but I own I shall rejoice at her departure from me, though I sincerely wish her happy. Lady Hartwill and her amiable sister are my constant visitors, and I feel both
delight

delight and much improvement from the intimacy they honour me with. On Thursday se'nnight is to be our grand route and supper; I have neither health nor spirits to enjoy a crowd, but I shall endeavour to exert both to please Mr. Menville. Martin behaves better, he is more distantly respectful, and I feel less restraint in his company than I used to do. Lord Longfield visits here frequently; he is a most sensible elegant man, much superior to all others of our male friends. But are you not angry I have so long delayed to mention Sir Charles Wentworth? yet what can I write more than I told you, when I said I thought him deserving of my beloved Charlotte; I payed him the highest compliment any man could deserve, and I will not pardon you if you trifle with his passion, or delay his happy day, after you are settled abroad. Was there not a little, *a very little* cruelty and caprice, in refusing to marry him here? alas! so many are the disagreeables we meet with in life; so frequently are our best friends, our best hopes, torn from us, that we should embrace with transport the opportunity which presents itself, of being in possession of one fond, one faithful friend, a blessing so rarely met with; think of this, my dear Mrs. Bertie, and accept happiness when in your power to obtain it.

I broke off on the entrance of my father and brother; we have had a long and most affecting conversation; Harry sails next Monday; my father leaves me the following day; he questioned me with the most scrutinizing look, "*If I was happy?*" I answered with eagerness, "that I was entirely so;" he said, pray heaven you may ever remain so; your assurance has given peace to my breast.

"Why

“ Why was the question necessary, my dear Mrs. Bertie? do I ever *appear* to be otherwise? I must speak to Miss Ellis to answer the question, and to teach me the art of disguising my feelings, if my countenance betrays me; for I would not for the world look otherwise than contented to my family and friends. I am going an air-ing, or, in the fashionable phrase, to air. Adieu.

During our absence Mrs. Shepherd arrived four days sooner than she was expected, and indeed without any invitation at all on my part; you never saw a woman so pleased and so vain on her daughter's intended marriage. “ She shall now spend every winter in town, M. Shepherd could have no pretence to deny her, when she had her daughter's house to go to.” The daughter put up her lip with a very significant smile at Mr. Thurkill, which might be easily translated into, “ I believe you will find yourself no welcome guest.” After we were withdrawn, the young folks being at the bottom of the room, Mrs. Shepherd was expatiating on the former subject, and observed, that with Mr. Thurkill's income, and the *seven thousand* pounds Mr. Shepherd gave his daughter, they might live very handsomely.”

“ Seven thousand, madam,” I replied, I “ thought Miss Shepherd had ten.”

“ And so I *shall have ten*,” said miss, who had caught my last words, and hastily advanced towards us.

“ Shall you indeed?” cried the mother, and “ where is it to come from, I want to know? if you have friends to give it you, well and good; but I think the *five thousand* from your father, was more than you could expect.”

Miss

Miss Shepherd, bursting with rage, rudely interrupting her mother, exclaimed, "Upon my word, madam, if you came up to town in order to quarrel with, and insult me, I could have spared the compliment; I am sure (with a haughty toss of her head) you have no reason to complain."

What there was in this pert speech to silence the mother, I know not; but her looks grew more placid, and she instantly changed the subject. I was however by no means capable of conversation; there was something in the *seven thousand*, and then the *five thousand* from your father," beyond my comprehension. Miss insisted she had ten; Mr. Menville told me she had ten; there must be a deception some where intended; I was lost in conjectures, and those not pleasant ones, when the gentlemen entered the drawing-room. Miss Shepherd, with a look at her mother, rose up, they went out together, soon returned, and with very different countenances, both cheerful and pleased.

I am not naturally curious, but I own I would give almost any thing to know the truth of this mysterious business; but I fear the secret lies too deep for me to fathom. I am much fatigued and shall close this letter and dispatch it to Paris, from whence I hope to hear from you. I shall write again when our route is over. May every happiness attend you and your worthy friends, and believe me ever,

Your truly affectionate

EMILY MENVILLE.

L E T T E R XXVII.

MISS ELLIS TO MRS. BERTIE.

DO not be alarmed, my dear madam; thank heaven all is over, and Mrs. Menville free from all danger.

On Thursday night last we had a prodigious number of persons at Mr. Menville's entertainment; above two hundred and twenty. Every thing was conducted in a style of magnificence and grandeur that surprised me; doubtless his fortune is immense. His amiable wife exerted herself to the utmost; every body was charmed with her; I never saw her more lovely. I was afraid for her, and once or twice bid her beware of fatigue.

"I can never feel it," was her answer, "whilst entertaining the friends of my husband."

It was near six o'clock before all the company left us; I was heartily tired, and Mrs. Menville began to acknowledge she was not sorry to retire; about nine in the morning her woman came into my apartment, and as gently as she could, acquainted me her mistress was very ill, and the accoucheur sent for; I hastily threw on my cloathes, and was with her in a moment; she was ill indeed.

"My dear Miss Ellis," said she, "God knows whether I may live or die, I hope I am resigned to his will; if the latter, tell M. Menville I have ever retained the warmest sentiments of duty and affection for him; tell my dear father,"—here a violent pang prevented her from proceeding;

proceeding; the doctor came; good heaven! how severe were her agonies for four hours—at length she was safely delivered of a *girl*. I was in transports, I flew down to Mr. Menville.

“She is safe, she is safe, the child is born.”

“What is it?” cried he eagerly,

“A girl,” I replied, “a beautiful girl!”

“I wish it had been a boy; but however, I am glad to hear she is safe and well; when she wishes to see me, I will come up.”

Disgusted at the air of indifference which accompanied his freezing words, I quickly left him, and returned to my friend; how great was her transport, how earnest, how grateful her thanks to heaven, for the blessing she enjoyed.

“Write, write, my dear Miss Ellis, to my father, now I feel what it is to be a parent.”

I promised to obey, and requested she would be calm and composed; she wished to see her husband, and in spite of his former indifference, he could not see her and the child without visible emotions. She said,

“My dear Mr. Menville, this is a new tie to cement our affection.”

The nurse requested her not to talk, and he took a very tender leave. This is now the third day, and the doctor pronounces her, as far as human judgment can aver, to be perfectly free from all danger; she will nurse the child herself, and has prevailed on Mr. Menville to consent to her wishes; I hope it will not be too much for her delicate frame; and then I must own I think her perfectly right, for surely, 'tis the duty of every mother, nor can I be persuaded there ever will exist that tender reciprocal affection between parent and child, when separated in early infancy.

“Miss Shepherd is to be married on Tuesday ; I dare not venture all my conjectures about this marriage, but I see things which I greatly dislike ; and last night Mrs. Menville’s woman, who is a very decent, prudent person, said to me, as I was undressing,

“ Thank God, madam, my dear lady is safely delivered, and that Miss Shepherd is to be married on Tuesday.”

“ You are not sorry to lose that young lady, or are you rejoiced she will be so well married ?”

“ Indeed, madam, I am very glad she is going from here ; at any rate, I am sure she is no friend to my lady.”

“ I am a little of your opinion, Mrs. Norton, I assure you.”

“ Ah ! madam, you are so good you don’t know half the wicked doings that are going forward ; I have heard and seen such things ; but it does not become me to make mischief in a family, yet I know that Miss Shepherd is a wicked young lady, and so thank God she is going out of this house.”

This was our dialogue ; I did not chuse to press her for intelligence, which I feared would realize my conjectures, for I am convinced she is a worthless girl, and her mother a very despicable character. They appear mighty attentive to Mrs. Menville, and anxious for her health, yet do not scruple going out every evening to some pleasurable party with Mr. Menville ; but I care not, so that our beloved friend gets well ; I trust every thing else to the care of Providence. My best compliments to all you love and honour ; our fair invalid sends her

her best wishes, and bids you remember, happiness is in your own power.

I am, ever dear madam, your sincere
obliged humble servant,

E. M. ELLIS.

P. S. Mr. Harry Oswald sailed last Monday, and his worthy father returned to Sudbury the following morning.

L E T T E R XXVIII.

MISS ELLIS TO MRS. BERTIE.

I SHALL continue to write on my dear madam, until your friend can resume her charming pen; conscious as I am what a poor substitute she has chosen, I can only shew my readiness to oblige, by my obedience to your commands.

'Tis now a late hour, all are retired to rest after a very busy day. This morning, or with more propriety I should say, yesterday morning, Miss Shepherd and Mr. Thurkill were united in Mr. Menville's drawing-room, Miss chusing to have the eclat of a special licence, and to be married in the house. Mr. Menville gave her away, and to do the lady justice, she looked very well, and not the least embarrassed; she was well drest too, and Mrs. Shepherd most abundantly fine for a morning. After the ceremony was over, they walked into Mrs. Menville's room; she congratulated them *with fervor*,

I thought, as if glad to be rid of a charge, always unpleasant to her feelings. After their return to the drawing-room, Mr. Menville presented Miss, I beg pardon, I mean Mrs. Thurkill, with a most beautiful and compleat set of pearls; an elegant and bountiful present from a *father*. We had a most superb dinner; I earnestly wished to have been excused partaking of it, and should have been a thousand times happier, to have shared my friend's boiled chicken, but neither would she or they permit it; I was therefore obliged to join the jovial party, for such they all were; and when the gentlemen came up to tea, Mr. Thurkill was so flushed, that I thought it very improper for a man of delicacy, in his situation; I gave his lady some credit for her good humour, and the little observation she made on the occasion; but the mother looked both surpris'd and displeas'd. We played two or three rubbers at whist, and having some refreshments about eleven, at half past twelve Mr. and Mrs. Thurkill, with Mrs. Shepherd, departed for their own house, greatly to my satisfaction; and I assure you, there was no appearance of discontent or regret on the part of Mr. Menville; on the contrary, he indulged himself in a hearty laugh, at the expence of the bridegroom, whose disorder was but too visible. I quickly left him, and having stept in to take leave of his angelic wife, I took up my pen to relate the occurrences of the day past; and now my dear madam, I bid you adieu for the present.

Mrs. Menville recovers amazingly fast; she sat up two hours this evening; the child is a lovely creature, even its father (who is greatly disappointed in his wishes) by her appearance,

now

now and then pronounces it is very pretty. We see him only once a day, for about ten minutes; he is seldom at home of an evening, and now Miss Shepherd is no more, we shall see him less than ever, I suppose. When I look back to the happy hours we spent, at the time you and Captain Harley were at Sudbury, when Emily Oswald was the delight, the ornament of every party; and think of the frustration of all our wishes, by a man whose violent passion, whose ardent love, aided by his overgrown fortune, indeed, was capable of making a worthy man break his word, and take advantage of his child's love and filial duty, to oblige him in a point so inimical to her own more humble views of felicity. When I recollect the raptures, the adoration, the generosity of Mr. Menville, and now see him, within ten months after his marriage, so careless and inattentive to the same object, the sole business of whose life seems devoted to the study of his pleasure. Ah! my dear Mrs. Bertie, how painful are my feelings, how mortifying my reflections, on the depravity of man. Yet this sweet woman, neither by word or look, gives the smallest suspicion that she is not perfectly happy. Grant heaven I may never have her trials; if they are proportioned to our prudence, I never shall, for I feel I should fall far, far beneath my amiable friend, in the practice of that virtue.

Mrs. Thurkill sent a card this morning, to enquire after Mrs. Menville, so polite; she should make her personal enquiries to-morrow. I wish her husband would take her out of England with all my heart, and then I will cordially wish her health and happiness; at present her significant smiles, her artful glances, and the levity

of her manners, make her quite odious to the "country parson's daughter," as she once called me in a pet, and I received the appellation as a compliment. Mr. Martin is here daily, his enquiries are anxious, but respectful, yet I don't like him, there is something in his manners—however, I will not hazard false conjectures. Lord Longfield is my favourite, a faithful, an affectionate, a mourning husband, a black swan my dear Mrs. Bertie! shew me such another pray, for the honour of the sex, with whom I am in no charity at present; although there is one would persuade me he is an exception to an almost general rule; but does not every man say the same before marriage? and how few observe it afterwards! I allow the present licentious conduct of many married women, as well as the levity and forwardness of very many young ones, justifies a gentleman in being extremely cautious how, and to whom he unites himself for life; but when he has chosen, when he is fortunate enough to find the wife of his choice, truly good, amiable and virtuous; when her whole time is given up to the study of pleasing him, promoting his peace, and making herself the delight of every society he wishes her to enjoy; tell me, where is an excuse to be found for the inconstancy, the vitiated taste of a man, that can prefer one of the most trifling of her sex, to a woman so nearly allied to perfection? in short, I find myself so much out of humour at present, that I shall lay aside my pen, and visit one who will teach me that candour and patience I feel I am in want of.

Several days have past without any particular occurrences; Mrs. Menville now sees company, and looks more lovely than ever; Lady
Hartwill

Hartwill and her sister are here daily; they are charming women, and what is to me the criterion of their merit, they admire and love our friend; we see less than ever of Mr. Menville; once a day, for five minutes, he drops in to see his wife, and behaves with all the polite indifference you can imagine.

I fear there is a blow preparing for Mrs. Menville, which will give her exquisite pain; a letter I received yesterday from my father, mentions the increasing illness of Mr. Oswald, who is desirous of concealing it from his daughter at this time; but from the day of his return to Sudbury, he has gradually grown worse; his son Anthony, who was going to the continent, is now with him; I don't like that young man half so well as poor Harry, who is gone a fortune hunting to India; he has nothing pleasing, nothing conciliating in his manners, and I think an abundance of self-sufficiency, a common fault with young men who have a smattering of every thing, without judgment to know their deficiencies. I am now to give you the pleasing intelligence, that Mrs. Menville intends tomorrow to resume her pen, and rid you of an uninteresting correspondent; and what will add to your satisfaction, is, that in all probability, this will be the very last letter you will ever receive from

Your sincerely affectionate,

I can yet sign,

E. M. ELLIS.

LETTER

My dearest friend,

She will not permit me to see her letter, but I have insisted upon adding a post-script; next week my kind Miss Ellis leaves me, and returns to her parents, and will be united to a truly amiable man. I know you will rejoice in her felicity; I most sincerely do, severely as I must feel the loss of such a companion. I thank heaven, myself and sweet girl are in perfect health. I shall soon resume my pen.

Your affectionate,

EMILY. MENVILLE.

L E T T E R XXIX.

ROBERT MARTIN, ESQ.
TO JOHN CHAMEERS, ESQ.

THANK ye Jack for your good wishes. I hope they will be propitious. My charmer is restored to health and her friends; she is a thousand times more beautiful than ever; I am all that is obsequious, respectful and attentive; she begins to treat me with more familiarity and politeness; something will be done in time. Curse on that stupid fellow Menville, for introducing Lord Longfield here; I can see (for what escapes a lover's eye?) that he exceedingly admires Mrs. Menville, who indeed does not except the dolt her husband, who is mad after Thurkill's wife, Miss Shepherd that was; yet why should I be angry with him, for that circum-

circumstance which makes in my favour? Thurkill keeps open house, a Pharo Bank too; I always suspected his fondness for play; let Menville beware, or he will soon be pigeoned; there is a knowing set frequents the house: every thing, I think, works for me; we have got rid of my eternal Duenna, the clergyman's daughter, she is returned to her parental fields, and is about this time to be married to the precise Colemore; a charming puritanical pair! that Lord Longfield; that Lady Hartwill, and her demure sister, are with Mrs. Menville forever? I must contrive to separate the party, or I shall lose a thousand opportunities; I think to make Menville jealous, for I don't believe the fellow a *very* complaisant husband to his wife; yet I have contrived to manage matters so, that he has no more suspicion of me, than he would of parson Colemore himself.

I have done the business faith! I broke off on the entrance of Menville himself. After some little introductory chat, I said carelessly,

"Don't you think there is a wonderful alteration in Longfield, since he visited at your house? his Lordship, a short time ago, could scarcely bear the sight of women; now he is so attentive, so polite to Mrs. Menville, feels so much delight in her company, and is so constant in his attendance, that if you would have the goodness to drop off, faith I believe he would have no objection to a second marriage, provided the lady was willing."

"I have indeed taken notice," answered Menville, with a constrained air, and features not very placid; "I have seen his Lordship's very great complaisance to my wife, nor do I like quite so much of it, for women have so much

much innate levity about them now a-days, that upon my soul I believe, if Lucretia or Portia themselves, were to come among them here, they would soon feel the contagion, and resign their heroics. But I have no wish for notoriety through the civilities of my wife, therefore I shall throw a little cold water on his Lordship's great friendship."

I coolly observed, he might be very disinterested, his character was in general respectable; but changing the subject as if indifferent to me, "How does Thurkill and *his wife*?" I am ashamed of my little attention to them; he's a good sort of fellow enough, and she a most agreeable pleasant woman. Menville's face was in a flame.

"Yes," said he, with some confusion, "they are very pleasing people; they see a great deal of company, and one is always sure of amusement there."

"And amusement, I replied gaily, "is the business of our lives, I shall therefore drop in sometimes to seek it, as well as others. A little desultory conversation concluded the visit; he will certainly give his wife some lessons about Lord Longfield; and I am persuaded there is a good understanding between Menville and Mrs. Thurkill, I suspected it before her marriage; and, would you believe it, the bridegroom got *tipsy for joy*, on his wedding day! what a letter for one who hates writing like me? adieu, Jack, I am glad the money was an accommodation."

Your's, faithfully,

ROBERT MARTIN.

LETTER.

E E T T E R XXX.

MRS. COLEMORE TO MRS. MENVILLE.

'T IS now three days since I became a wife, my dear Mrs. Menville, and in a little more than three weeks, I hope to see you. My father and mother are wonderfully fond of Mr. Colemore, and to do the man justice, he has some good qualities; many insinuating ways, and then, such a proof of judgment in selecting me from the beautiful and well-portioned damsels, to whom he might, without the imputation of vanity, have made proposals; dear me, what a triumph to my self-consequence; can I help loving a man, who has made me so well pleased with myself? but to be serious, I have every reason at present to think myself a fortunate woman; and a circumstance which enables me to look forward with hope and confidence, is, that Mr. Colemore intends to reside chiefly in the country, a town life agreeing as little with *his* taste as my own. We shall therefore avoid the contagion of example, nor be seduced from the right path by those delusive pleasures which ruin the morals and fortunes of the rich and great. Would to heaven a certain person was at liberty to follow her inclinations; and apropos, suppose, as your father is not very well, and is extremely anxious to see you, and your little angel, suppose you were to be guilty of such a great piece of self-denial; as to *ask leave* of absence for a fortnight, to visit your friends; it will confirm your health, do your sweet babe a world of good, give you
the

the higher relish for the diversions of town when you return back; and though the season of the year is not very inviting, yet your inducements are great; your father, my father, joins in the request; name an early day, and Mr. Colemore and myself will meet you on the road. How go on the Thurkill's? how does my favourite Lord Longfield, Lady Hartwill, and her sister? yet do not trouble yourself to answer my questions by pen and ink, tell me everything personally—think of the pleasure you will give us all, by complying with our wishes. Make my respects to all you love, and believe me in every situation of life,

My dear Mrs. Menville,
your ever obliged,
and truly affectionate,

E. M. COLEMORE.

Mr. Colemore desires I will say every thing for him that is respectful and kind.

L E T T E R XXXI.

MRS. MENVILLE TO MRS. COLEMORE.

A FEW lines only, my dear Mrs. Colemore, to make my sincerest congratulations to you, on a union which has every prospect of happiness your warmest friends could wish for you; may they be permanent and equal to your merit. Your obliging wishes for my company are answered; I ventured to acquaint Mr. Menville of the indifferent state of my father's health, and desire to see him.

“Certainly.”

“Certainly, Mrs. Menville, I can have no objection to your visit; a fortnight’s country air may be of service, both to you and the child.”

Thus, then, I have permission to wait on you. Next Tuesday, about eleven, I shall set off for Sudbury; my heart beats with joy, to revisit those shades where I pass my happiest hours; to embrace a father whom I revere, and friends whom I love; to visit the tomb of a sainted mother, to recall her precepts, her example to my memory, and implore the Almighty to guide my mind, and instruct my judgment, that I may, like her, quit the world with the delightful consciousness of having done my duty, both as a wife, mother and friend. Whatever my trials in this world may be, let me enjoy self-approbation, and I can never be truly unhappy. But I entreat your pardon for recurring so much to self, when I only ought, at this time, to rejoice with you. I have written to my father, and in four days hence, hope to see at Sudbury those I love and honour; till then adieu, my dear Mrs. Colemore, and assure yourself of my most perfect esteem and friendship.

EMILY MENVILLE.

BETTER

L E T T E R XXX.

MRS. MENVILLE TO MRS. BERTIE.

I Write, my dear Mrs. Bertie, from the house of my beloved father; alas! shortly must I lose that reverend parent; I cannot deceive myself; all hope is fled, and I endeavour to learn resignation to the Divine will; but the refractory heart repels my better reason. You may remember, on my father's arrival in town, I thought him greatly altered, and when he left me, I saw too plainly a decay of constitution, struggling with an active mind. Mrs. Colemore, after her marriage, wrote, and entreated me to visit Sudbury; Mr. Menville was kind enough to spare me, and my good friends met me on the road. They prepared me by degrees to see my father; whom I found very ill indeed; Anthony was with him, but he has not the tenderness of my poor Harry; he received me with coldness enough, yet his pride seemed gratified by the appearance of my equipage. I have now been here six days, and every hour increases my apprehensions of a fatal event, which cannot be far distant. I have apprised my husband of my distress; whether he will come down or not, I can't say, but I shall thank him for the compliment if he does come.

I was called off to attend my father, just recovered from a fainting fit; he requested we might be alone; oh! my dear Mrs. Bertie, what an affecting conversation; I have been guilty of some falsehood during the course of it, but to speak peace and comfort to a dying parent; to
 sooth

sooth his last hours, and enable him to leave the world in peace with himself, must plead my excuse, and will, I trust, procure my pardon.

"My dear child," said he, "I am hastening to join your angelic mother; I have no regrets to quit the world, now my children are, as I hope, comfortably provided for, and at an age to know good from evil. One painful idea only obtrudes upon my mind; and at this moment, when riches and splendour lose their fascinating charms; when piety and virtue appear to be the only true blessings of life, at this moment I feel I did wrong to break engagements I had given countenance to, and wound two faithful hearts. Can you, my child, reconcile me to myself; can you with truth say you are happy?"

Kissing his hand, on my knees I replied, I "am, *I am* happy, my dear father, Mr. Menville indulges me in every wish of my heart."

"But is he affectionate, is he fond of his child, do you love him?" cried he.

"He is every thing I can desire, and I call heaven to witness, I love him truly, and him only."

"Then I am satisfied," he said, "my dear, my affectionate, my dutiful girl; you have made my last moments happy, receive the blessing of a parent who can truly boast, that from your infancy to the present hour, you never gave me a pang, but of my creating; let this be your consolation, my dearest Emily, when I am no more; my heart, my last words, will bear testimony to your goodness. I have no more to say, but that I hope my children will always live in unity and love with each other; heaven preserve my poor Harry, and may you meet again in peace."

peace. Commend me to your husband, tell him an obedient daughter must ever be an affectionate wife; I have given him a treasure, may he know its value, and estimate it accordingly, and I cannot wish him greater happiness."

Such, my dear Mrs. Bertie, was the substance of our conversation; I repeat it with mingled emotions of tenderness and pride. Yes, my beloved father, your Emily will deserve your love; be you her guardian angel, to watch and direct every action of her life, and if the erring heart should ever, for a moment, forget its duty, may she remember her parents valued praise, and she must be virtuous.

E. MENVILLE.

L E T T E R XXXIII.

MRS. COLEMORE IN CONTINUATION.

MY dear Mrs. Bertie, our amiable friend enjoins me to write, as she at present is incapable of holding her pen. The worthy Mr. Oswald is no more; he expired last night, blessing his children, with a perfect resignation, and a joyful hope of everlasting bliss. May my last end be like his! Mrs. Menville, though in hourly expectation of the event, could not support the stroke when it came; she was carried lifeless from the room, and we were very apprehensive both she and her sweet infant would have suffered severely. On her recovery to reason, I took the little cherub in my arms,

"My

“ My dear friend, remember you are a mother.”

“ I do, I will,” said she with fervor, spare me for an hour, and I will be all you wish; I retired—at the expiration of that time my father went to her apartment, and in less than another hour, brought her to us with a composed, though melancholy air. Being persuaded to retire to her bed, after taking some wine and water, and a bit of biscuit, I accompanied her for the night, which she in vain endeavoured to resist, for I would not leave her; she slept but little, yet thank heaven, is this morning tolerably composed; ’tis evidently seen that she struggles hard to obtain it, but the effort will succeed. I never saw such apathy and indifference in a young man, as in Anthony Oswald; from whence had he that constitutional coldness? Mr. and Mrs. Oswald had the kindest, most benevolent hearts in the world; my sweet friend, and the amiable Harry, are sensibility itself: but this youth seems a stranger to the softer passions; no matter, thank God no one is dependent on him. Mr. Oswald left about sixteen hundred pounds in money; one thousand is given to Harry, the other six to his little granddaughter; he would not, he says in his will, “ pay Mr. Menville so poor a compliment, as to think it necessary to bequeath such a trifle to *his* wife.” Anthony’s estate is little more than five hundred pounds a year, therefore Mr. Oswald would not burthen it with legacies, but when he comes into possession of the living Mr. Menville secured for him, he is to pay Harry another thousand pounds from the estate. This last article does not please him; when the will was read this morning, to which my father and Mr.

Mr. Menville are executors, he said, "He could not see why he should be obliged to pay a thousand pounds from what was a voluntary gift of Mr. Menville to him, and he thought his father had no right to make such a bequest."

"That is not a matter now to be disputed," replied my father, "it may be long enough before your brother can claim *any thing* from you; you have two years nearly to reach one-and-twenty; Harry three, before he is entitled to any legacies, therefore, sir, if you please, let the affair rest for the present, and if you chuse to dispute your father's will, let it be when you may claim a right so to do."

This speech of my father's silenced the gentleman, though his sullen looks shewed a rancorous heart.

Mrs. Menville has a letter from her husband; he excuses himself from coming down to visit her father, on some trifling pretences; desires she will be careful of her health, and concludes a short letter, with some cold compliments to her father and friends. I make no comments; Mrs. Menville will see no defects, may they be ever concealed, but I fear greatly for her happiness. Mr. Colemore receives letters from town, which give him great uneasiness; he almost adores Mrs. Menville, and laments she is united to a man, who appears so little sensible of her value.

This day, the sixth after Mr. Oswald's decease, his body was committed to the silent grave. He is happy, his friends are the only sufferers, but time will mellow grief into a pleasing remembrance, when we contemplate the rewards which attend the performance of our several duties. I have often thought, in the three last days of Mr. Oswald's illness, that could the boldest unbeliever,

liever, the most licentious libertine, have witnessed the ease, the tranquility, the lively hope of eternal felicity, which beamed forth in every word and look of that good man, when talking of his approaching end, the hardiest wretch would have trembled at his crimes, and must have confessed, how awful, how beautiful was virtue and a self-approving conscience, at that tremendous moment! my amiable friend will soon resume her pen; she sends her best love, and I beg you will believe, my dear Mrs. Bertie, that although you have no longer a correspondent in the name of Ellis, you must ever hold a considerable place in the friendship and esteem of

E. M. COLEMORE.

L E T T E R XXXIV.

MRS. MENVILLE TO MRS. BERTIE.

Tuesday night.

I Arrived in town yesterday, my dear friend, and met your welcome letter; though but a few lines, it conveyed the pleasing intelligence of your health and safety, and therefore gave me perfect satisfaction. I indeed want such cordials to raise my drooping spirits, which are more than commonly depressed from the remembrance of the heavy loss I have sustained, and the apprehensions of the heavier evils yet to come. To have our friends cut off from us by death, is a natural event we must expect, and such as religion and resignation to the divine will, must

must in time reconcile us to support ; but tell me, what consolation can be found, that may enable us to bear the loss of that affection which love and duty has made our chiefest happiness ? where is the balm to heal a wound inflicted by the hand you adore ? oh ! my dear Mrs. Bertie, I can no longer deceive myself, no longer conceal my wretchedness ; Mr. Menville has ceased to retain any regard for me. What was my reception yesterday, after three weeks absence ! when I flew to Mr. Menville in the library, he turned his head at my entrance, and coldly said,

“ How d’ye do Mrs. Menville, really the country air has not improved your person, for you are thinner and paler than ever I think.”

I was for a moment petrified, but recovering myself, I took his hand, and replied,

“ I have had some troubles, which may have altered my complexion, but my heart is unchangeably returned to you, and from your tenderness I hope to regain both my health and spirits ; but you do not ask after our little darling, *she* is, at *least* much improved ; shall I bring her to you ?”

“ Not now,” answered he, carelessly, “ I am very busy.”

I took the hint, and told him I should retire to dress for dinner.

“ Do so,” was all his reply.

A flood of tears relieved my oppressed heart, on my entrance into my dressing-room, and it was some time before I could recover myself to ring for my woman ; poor Norton looked at me with enquiring eyes ; it struck me ; she had so often seen me in tears of late, why should she express by her countenance, more sorrow
and

and curiosity than before now. She was too respectful, however, to ask questions, nor did I chuse to notice her particular attention. When the dinner was announced, I went down to the dining parlour, Mr. Martin, and a Mr. Anderson, with a Sir Edward Miller, were present, the latter I had never seen, consequently Mr. Menville was obliged to introduce him, and in doing it, there was such an expression of consciousness in his eyes, as gave me great pain. Sir Edward appeared to be a polite man, but there was nothing remarkable in his person or manners, and I should suppose him one of those common characters you meet with every where. Mr. Martin, however, by his politeness and respectful compliments, endeavoured to raise me into consequence with myself, and I behaved with as much cheerfulness as I could assume. At table I enquired how Mr. and Mrs. Thurkill did, Mr. Menville slightly answered they were very well, and immediately addressed Mr. Anderson. I happened by chance to look at Martin, his eyes were fixed upon me, he withdrew with a sigh, and I thought, looked reproachfully on my husband; I did not appear to notice either, but soon afterwards withdrew to the drawing-room, and was followed by Martin, who began to talk of my friends the Colemore's, in a strain of panegyric, which insensibly engaged my attention, for what is so great a compliment to a delicate mind, as praising those we love—from talking of their merits with esteem; by a natural transition he mentioned the other pair, the Thurkill's.

“ I go there now and then,” said he, “ because one meets every body there. They have a Pharo table, and as that amusement is the rage of
the

the day, their house is always crowded by both sexes."

"A Pharo table!" I repeated, "Why I thought persons who admitted them in their houses, were perfectly infamous, liable to the insults of the mob, and exposed to the impertinent intrusions of every petty constable and informer who may chuse to search the apartments."

"Yes," replied Martin, smiling, "Yes, the poor devils who keep gaming houses for bread, are indeed amenable to the law, and run the risk of prosecutions and *persecutions*; but we are too polite to permit the laws to affect people of fashion who assist in framing them; on the contrary, persons above the vulgar, may brave every law with impunity, and Mr. Thurkill is by no means singular in openly encouraging gambling at his house; there are many of rank and fortune that do the same."

"I think myself very fortunate," said I, "that Mr. Menville has no passion that way, for really we country ladies have such dreadful ideas of the horrid consequences which attend a love of play, that I should conjure up a thousand frightful images to ruin my peace whenever he was absent."

Martin looked at me with an air of surprise and concern, I thought; he made no reply, but got up, traversed the room two or three times without speaking, then sat down again, but with so much embarrassment, that my conjectures began to be very painful, and it was with trembling I asked,

"Do you and Mr. Menville ever play at Thurkill's?"

"Madam,

"Madam," said he, starting, as if he did not hear the question, which I again repeated."

"Yes, now and then," was his answer, and then, as if wishing to change the subject, he mentioned my little girl, hoped she was well, and asked, when we intended to make a Christian of her.

I replied, "she was born such, I hope, and has been privately baptized before I left town."

"A second Emily, I suppose."

"Yes," I replied, "Emily Charlotte is her name."

"May she inherit the beauty and virtues of her amiable mother," said he, with fervor.

My heart thanked him for the wish. Indeed I begin to think much better of Martin, and although his conduct has been reprehensible in the highest degree, from your account of the unfortunate Mary Smith, and from some part of his former behaviour to me, yet I hope he has seen his error, and unless he is the most consummate hypocrite on earth, he is entirely weaned from his follies, and desirous of beginning a new system of life; I hope this is truly the case.

At tea we were joined by the other gentlemen; Mr. Anderson I do not admire, there is something bold and penetrating in his looks; he behaves politely, yet I cannot like him. Sir Edward I have mentioned before. When the company left us, Mr. Menville said,

"As you must be a little fatigued, my dear, you had better retire early; I am engaged out this evening; etiquette will not admit of paying visits, until your friends have called on you, I am therefore obliged to leave you."

VOL. I.

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"I beg,

"I beg, my dear sir, you will make no apologies, I shall go early to rest, and wish you much pleasure."

He seemed glad to escape from me, I suppressed a rising sigh, and came up to my dressing-room. I have written thus far, and finding my spirits sink at the recollection, I bid you adieu, my dear Mrs. Bertie, for this night.

Thursday Evening.

Yesterday I had not an hour to spare to take up my pen; Mr. and Mrs. Thurkill, Lady Hartwill and her sister, General and Mrs. Woodward, and some others who were at our rout, had sent cards during my confinement, and to whom I had returned my thanks, previous to leaving town, payed us visits; Mr. Menville invited the Thurkill's to dinner; I entreated the same favour of Lady Hartwill and her sister, and not being particularly engaged, they kindly accorded with my wishes. We therefore spent a pleasant day, only interrupted by Mrs. Thurkill's fainting after dinner, from which she soon recovered, and which only created significant smiles among the men. I should be sorry to find my opinions governed by prejudice, or take an unjustifiable dislike to any person, yet I must confess, I feel an unaccountable shivering, and a something nearly bordering on antipathy, when Mrs. Thurkill approaches me. Let me not weakly indulge prejudices against any one, no, not even against *her*, to whom I have no obligations for even common politeness; but my dear friend, we cannot always repress our feelings, or conquer involuntary disgusts, and to esteem *that* woman, never will be in my power. Mrs. Shepherd,

Shepherd, I find, returned that morning to Sudbury, not with her own inclination, but by the express commands of her husband, who is still very ill; I saw him but once, and then he appeared so weak and emaciated, that I could not help feeling pity, though I have a contempt for his character. Mr. Thurkill mentioned his design of going to Oxford this day on particular business.

His lady said, "having many things to settle in her domestic arrangements, she should play the good housewife, and shut her doors for one day at least, the first she could call her own since her marriage."

Lady Hartwill congratulated her in her gay manner, on being such an example to good wives, as to shut herself up to attend *domestic* duties. Mr. Thurkill, I thought, looked with a mixture of incredulity and contempt, Mr. Martin with an expression of disdain, but no one spoke. My little Emily, being by desire brought into the room, engaged every one's attention.

"What a lovely creature," cried out Mrs. Bloomfield, "Why, Mr. Menville, do you not doat on her?"

"Not absolutely," replied he, "she is very well, but I should have liked a boy much better; you know girls are always an incumbrance."

"And boys," retorted she, with some warmth, "if they resemble their fathers, are oftentimes a disgrace to their family by their profligacy: but this sweet child shall resemble her mother, and then you will have no cause to regret the incumbrance, as you politely term it."

"Dear madam," replied he, "do not be angry, has not a favourite author with your

sex, presumed to call the ladies a drag on a man's fortune?"

"And by whom was it said," asked Lady Hartwill, "by an ignorant young man, whose narrow ideas were confined to trade only, and who was deservedly despised for his want of judgment and liberality."

"You had better give up Menville, whilst you are well," cried Martin, "the ladies alone are too strong for you, and was it necessary, I would offer myself as an auxiliary, so well am I convinced of their sterling merit."

"We are obliged to you, Mr. Martin," returned her ladyship, "but we can fight our own battles, even tho' our good friend here, out of complaisance to her uncourtly Lord, does not chuse to lend her assistance."

"Convinced as I am, my dear lady," I replied, "that Mr. Menville only jests on the subject, it would ill become me to interfere; but I thank you in the name of the sex, for being our advocate, and I know your opponent is pleased that you so generously defend us, since no man thinks higher of women of merit, than Mr. Menville."

"No man has more just cause to think highly of them," answered her ladyship, tho' perhaps few are equally fortunate with himself, yet his gratitude for the happy distinction in his favour, ought to make him an enthusiast in our cause."

"At least, madam," he replied gaily, "I ought not to have sported my thoughts so freely, before ladies so respectable, I therefore acknowledge my error, and bow to your *unquestionable superiority*."

His peculiar manner in pronouncing these last words, again called up her ladyship's pretended warmth.

"Wretch!"

“Wretch !” said she, “I disclaim your compliment, you are unworthy the blessing you possess; I will not enter the list with *you*; a mind hardened against conviction, is not an object to contend with, and your pretended humility is equally affronting with your illiberal sarcasms; but if any other gentleman,” looking round, smiling, “is disposed to dispute our superiority, I am ready to throw the gauntlet.”

“I believe, madam,” said Sir Edward, “you will find none in this presence, hardy enough to accept the challenge; the empire of the ladies is established from authority, both ancient and modern, and it would be paying mankind a poor compliment indeed, if we could believe they submitted to a government their reason might condemn. On the contrary, I am disposed to think every man of sense honours your lovely sex, and is conscious, in a thousand instances, how much you soar above us, when called to extraordinary exertions of virtue and fortitude.”

“I thank you, sir,” returned Lady Hartwill, “you have spoke the sentiments of a man of honour, and you have spoken truly, for I know several instances of women, whose conduct in the most trying circumstances, have evinced as much virtue, greatness of mind and fortitude, as the noblest Roman hero could have boasted. However, I beg the company’s pardon for engrossing so much of the conversation to myself.”

She then changed the subject, and very soon after Mr. and Mrs. Thurkill took leave, declining to stay supper, of which the others partook, and stayed ’till a late hour.

Mr. Menville dines out to day; I see very little of him, for yesterday he told me he could

not bear to have his rest disturbed, by the child's being brought to me, as it always is, once for the night, and therefore, 'till she was weaned, he would sleep in another room.

You may suppose, though I was mortified, I could make no objection; but the proposal too plainly proves his indifference, and my misfortune in losing the affection of my husband; every honest art I must try to regain it; I watch his looks, listen to the approbation he bestows on different women, and must, if possible, acquire some of those graces he admires in others; nor will I doubt my success; he is too generous, not to be gratified with my attentions to please, and far from indulging sorrow, and brooding over evils, I will rally my spirits, assume a cheerfulness foreign to my heart, call in the aid of dress, of elegance, and neatness, and by having valuable acquaintance to enliven our parties, make, I hope, his home agreeable to him. Methinks my heart already feels lighter, from a certainty of success; join your wishes, my dear friend, to my efforts, and I hope still to be a happy woman. Your next letter, I trust, will acquaint me you have rewarded the attachment of a worthy man, by making him a present of yourself. My sweet Emily makes her demands in a manner I cannot refuse. Adieu for the present,

Your affectionate

E. MENVILLE.

L E T.

L E T T E R XXXV.

ROBERT MARTIN, ESQ.
TO JOHN CHAMBERS, ESQ.

WISH me joy, dear Jack, for my success now is indubitable: pride, resentment, disappointed love, and sweet revenge will make the charmer mine. But I speak in metaphor. Well then, here follows the explanation, and I will be methodical.

Some weeks ago, Mrs. Menville was sent for to attend a dying father. She obeyed the summons to my great vexation. However, "all is for the best." The old man died; she was absent upwards of three weeks, during which time Menville almost lived at Thurkill's; and, I am well informed, has lost very considerably at play: so much the better.

The beginning of this week Mrs. Menville returned; and never did she look so elegantly beautiful as in her sable dress. The insensible, the infatuated husband was the only man who could behold her without adoration.

Two days ago I dined there with a party. The Thurkills were present. The husband mentioned his intention of going to Oxford. Yesterday the lady announced her design of shutting her doors for the day, to attend domestic duties. I have such a contempt for her character, that I suspected some design was in her head; but I had no idea the journey was fictitious.

This morning about one o'clock, as I was preparing to go out, Jack Williams came in

with a face brimful of intelligence. "O, Martin, I have a devilish fine story for you, a delightful discovery."

"Pr'ythee let us have it then," said I.

"Why then, what think you of your friend Menville being detected with his friend Thurkill's new-married lady?"

"The devil!" cried I. "Is it possible! Detected by whom, dear Jack?"

"Why, by the man himself. But you shall hear the story, as it is now circulating all over the town. It seems Thurkill had suspected an improper intimacy between them, and pretended a journey, with a view to give them full opportunity of being together. Where he concealed himself I don't know; but Menville dined there, and in the evening, when the gentleman and lady were enjoying a comfortable tête à tête, he very unceremoniously broke in upon them, with his footman and groom. The consequence was, that he treated both with contempt, and 'tis said, turned the lady out of doors, and designs to take a legal revenge on Menville."

"A pretty piece of business, truly," said I. Menville will cut a cursed silly figure before his wife, I think: as to the rest, I believe the lady was no vestal, and the fault, you know, is only a venial one in the eyes of the world.

"Aye, so you men of gallantry think; but, upon my soul, I would not seduce a virtuous woman, whether maid, wife, or widow, on any account."

"But if they seduce you, Jack."

"That there are many women who disgrace themselves and families, I believe," replied he; "but I heartily wish every gay, dissipated girl
could

could hear the opinions of men on their levity and imprudence."

"Nonsense!" cried I, interrupting him; "don't pretend to be a censor, Jack. If the dear creatures will condescend to forget what they owe to themselves, in order to oblige us, why surely we cannot be ungrateful enough to preach them out of their kindness.—But come, I'll go Menville's, and see how matters are there this morning. The wife, I dare say, will find some damned good-natured friend to tell her the story, with all its aggravations."

Accordingly, shaking off honest Jack, I walked to Bedford-Square. "Is your master at home?"

"No, Sir."

"Is your lady at home?"

"No, Sir."

Very strange, thought I, both should be denied.—I turned from the door, however, and resolved to call at Thurkill's. I trotted on to Manchester-Square: here I was admitted in a moment, and found Thurkill in his library, writing.

"O, Martin," said he, rising, "you have heard of my pretty adventure, I suppose, and are come to condole with the cornuted husband."

"Not I, faith," cried I, very carelessly; those things are so common now-a-days, they neither require concealment or condolence. If you are mighty fond of your wife, why, indeed I am sorry for you; but if not, 'tis of little consequence who she likes."

"Fond of her!" repeated he; "to be sure I was fond of her; but I don't think I should have married her, had not Menville persuaded me, and ten thousand pounds been backed to

his arguments, as additional charms. But, upon my soul, I believe he had his own motives, and merely wanted me as a screen to her irregularities. I am determined, therefore, he shall pay for his good advice; and though I am not very desirous of being held forth to the public in so despicable a light, yet I will not quietly put up with an infringement on my property."

Thurkill's air and manner convinced me he wanted to pocket the affront, and that his love, at least, was not much wounded. I asked him what was become of his wife.

"Gone to the devil," said he, "I suppose or to Menville."

Just at this moment a servant came in, and delivered a note to the following effect.

"ILL treated as I am, I do not suppose you intend carrying your malice so far as to deny me my clothes. I have therefore sent my servant to bring with her every thing that is mine, in my wardrobe, drawers, or elsewhere, until, convinced of your rash judgment, you repent of your error, and feel for the disagreeable situation you have thrown me into.

C. THURKILL."

Thurkill read the note; and ordering the woman into the library, "Mrs. James," said he, "you are at liberty to remove all your mistress's wardrobe, except her jewels; those I have already secured; without possession of the brightest gem, a female can boast of, her *reputation*, she is little entitled to wear others. I wish her well and happy, and am thankful she so soon threw off the mask, and preserved me from being the dupe of her infamy."

The

The servant courtesied and withdrew.—I was dying to know where she lived; but he, either from design or contempt, neglected to enquire. He told me his solicitor had been with him, and he intended laying his damages at 10,000*l*.

Having gained all the circumstances I could, I left him; and calling in at several houses, found every body busy about Thurkill's affair. Determined, however, to see Mrs. Menville, if possible, I presented myself at her door in the evening, and was admitted; but, to my extreme vexation, found that eternal visitant, Lady Hartwill, with her, who was just let in before me. I had scarcely paid my compliments before Lord Longfield was announced, whose countenance bore testimony to the uneasiness of his mind. Finding Mrs. Menville quite cheerful and easy, it was easily seen she must be entirely ignorant of the events which happened the preceding day. His Lordship slightly enquired after Mr. Menville. She replied, he was well in the morning, but was gone in a party to Windsor.

Lady Hartwill looking at me, arose and went to the furthest window: I followed her. "Mr. Martin," said she, "doubtless you have heard the diabolical news of the day. What is to be done? The papers will be full of the affair to-morrow: she must know it. Good God! that any man in his senses could use such a woman ill!"

"As it is impossible to keep the matter a secret, I should suppose your Ladyship the properest person to break it tenderly to her."

The entrance of a servant with a letter caught our attention.

"From

“ From my master, Madam.”

“ Bless me !” cried Mrs. Menville, “ what can this mean ! no accident, I hope. Pardon me, if my impatience obliges me to appear rude.”

She hastily broke the seal, read a line or two, grew pale, and trembled. Rising up, “ Have the goodness to excuse me for a few minutes,” said she, hastily. But before she reached the door, she tottered, and fell senseless.

Lord Longfield, who was near her, rather broke the fall, but was not time enough to prevent it. Lady Hartwill and her woman conveyed her to her apartment. On returning life, she spoke not, only sighed most heavily. When they left the drawing-room, his Lordship, with an expression of grief and vexation in his looks, cried out, “ There’s a woman to be neglected and forsaken for an abandoned wanton ! By heavens, I cannot bear it. I never saw more excellence in the sex than in Mrs. Menville : beauty is her least perfection. Fool, dotard ! to “ leave a Paradise, and wander in a desert.” He took up his hat. “ Excuse me, Mr. Martin ; I am unfit company at present. I shall spend a few hours hence to know how the poor lady does.”

He left the room. I waited some time in hopes Lady Hartwill would return. However, a servant only made her appearance, with her lady’s compliments, and apologies that she was too ill to return again to the drawing-room. I was consequently obliged to quit the house, without knowing the contents of the letter, which excited my curiosity greatly ; for what the devil can be said to a wife on such occasions ! Good night,

night, Jack ; to-morrow, perhaps, I may write again.

Your's,

ROBERT MARTIN.

L E T T E R XXXVI.

ROBERT MARTIN, ESQ.

TO JOHN CHAMBERS, ESQ.

THIS morning, early as decency would admit, I posted to Bedford-Square. I enquired for Mr. Menville : he was gone out of town for a few days. " How is your lady ! "

" She is better, Sir, but not well enough to see company this morning."

I left my card : and, although I never had visited at Lady Hartwill's, walked directly there, and was admitted. She and her sister were at breakfast. I was received with politeness, and apologized for the intrusion, from the anxiety I felt on Mrs. Menville's account.

" A servant is just returned from Bedford-Square," said her Ladyship ; " Mrs. Menville is much better ! I am preparing to spend the day with her ; for in her situation she ought not to be without a friend."

" May I ask your Ladyship the contents of Mr. Menville's letter ? "

" Why," replied she, " he acknowledges the affair, makes a slight apology, says he shall be absent four or five days, and at his return hopes she will have conquered any little resentment which love or pride may raise, and meet him with

with good-humour; that such trifling affairs happened every day, and he expected his wife should be superior to narrow prejudices, nor think she has any right to reproach him. Something in this style he wrote; and I left her with a resolution to answer, assure him of her affection, and entreat his return to a wife, whose whole study it should be to make him happy."

"What worthless creatures men are!" cried Mrs. Bloomfield. "This Menville is not a young trifling vain fellow. I should have thought some stability might have been expected from him, when united to a woman of beauty and merit. But men at all ages are alike, I think, dissipated, extravagant, and given up to what they call gallantry; that is, indulging their passions at the expence of the peace and happiness of their family and friends."

"Do not, dear Madam, be too general in your censure," I replied, (though my conscience gave me a little twinge, Jack.)

"Where are the exceptions?" answered she; "I believe you will find it difficult to point them out."

Before I could reply, Lady Hartwill arose. The carriage was announced: I handed her into it, and said I should do myself the honour of calling at Mrs. Menville's door in the evening.

In the evening I went, and, contrary to my expectation, was admitted. I found the same party as the preceding day, with the addition of Mrs. Bloomfield. They appeared to be engaged in cheerful conversation. Mrs. Menville looked pale and languid, but pleasing and attentive to her friends. Lord Longfield and myself came away together. He expressed his ad-
miration

mirration of her in the strongest terms; but it was the mind, the manners that charmed him. With all my heart, my Lord; let your admiration stop there, and I care not:

“ I take her body, *you* her mind;

“ Which has the better bargain ?”

He told me, by the advice of Lady Hartwill, she would open her doors as usual, and appear to be entirely unacquainted with the reports of the world. But, Jack, all the sex are monopolizers; they hate rivals, and seldom forgive infidelities, unless they are persuaded to retaliate. To that point I must labour to bring this charming creature. Yet, would you believe it, libertine as I am, I sometimes have a sort of regret to level such a mind with the fashionable demireps of the day. After all, it must be confessed, there is something beautifully interesting in virtue; something awful, that even libertines revere. And I swear to you, Jack, that, was I united to a woman like Menville's wife, I believe, yes, I verily believe, I could love and esteem her for life. But the women are grown so cursed licentious, the misses so bold and assuming, the wives so lost to modesty and delicacy, the husbands in general so accommodating, in order to screen or palliate their own vices, that, faith, a man who knows the world has but little inclination to marry.

I met Thurkill this evening. He goes in reality out of town to-morrow, to Wales, I think, having taken all necessary steps to bring on his affair; so that we shall soon see published,
 “ Taken in Short-hand in the Court, the Trial
 of

of William Menville, Esq. for Crim. Con. with Mrs. Thurkill, &c."

When any thing new occurs, you will hear from me again; meantime, if I can serve you this side of the water, pray command me.

ROBERT MARTIN.

L E T T E R XXXVII.

MRS. MENVILLE TO MRS. BERTIE.

COULD the scandal which now circulates at every tea-table, fashionable rout, and retailed by every newspaper, be concealed, my dear Mrs. Bertie, your friend would be dumb for ever; but, as I know you will hear the story with every malicious aggravation, I write to tell you, that though a worthless woman may have stolen my husband's affections for a time, I hope a late *denouement* will restore them to me more warmly than ever. I was indeed severely shocked at the time; but when I came to reflect, when I considered my situation in a comparative view with Mrs. Thurkill's, what are my sufferings to her's! Driven from her husband's house, branded with infamy, deprived of all her late boasted consequence, the jest of every licentious wretch, and shunned by every virtuous woman, without one consoling thought, one single reflection but what must occasion shame and self-reproach. O! my dear friend, what are my painful feelings compared to her's! Poor creature! how truly pitiable must be her destiny, if she feels the sting of self-condemnation! That Mr. Menville should have

have reduced any woman to a state so deplorable, is indeed a painful reflection; for him, for her I feel, not for myself, though I may bear the malicious smile, or meet the more humiliating words of pity. Conscious innocence, a sense of rectitude, and the particular attention I will pay my husband, shall support me through all the malice of the world!

Mr. Menville went for a few days out of town; he returned yesterday, and entered my dressing-room in some confusion. I rose, and holding out my hand, "You are wellcome home, my dear Mr. Menville."

He embraced me warmly. "I see," said he, "I need not have feared to encounter my Emily's looks."

"No indeed," I replied, with earnestness, "you need not. I have no disagreeable retrospections in your company, and wish always to meet you with smiles of tenderness."

"You are truly good, *I believe*," said he, "and I will study to deserve you."

Irang for my child: I thought he started when she was brought to me. He turned his head to the window with some emotion: I did not appear to observe it. He returned, kissed the little angel, and played with its hand.

"Do you see any company, my dear?" he asked.

"The same as usual: some friends call every day. You do not wish to be denied?"

"No, by no means," cried he. "I must stand the rub of a few witticisms, I suppose."

"A slight tax," replied I, smiling, and changed the subject.

We dined *en famille* with good-humour on both sides. In the evening several friends came in, but

but behaved with a decorum and respect my husband little expected, I believe, and contributed not a little to exhilarate his spirits. The worst part of the story is, that a prosecution is commenced against Mr. Menville, and his name will be exposed in a court of justice.

Ah! my dear, how little are we capable of judging what is best for us! The loss of my father I thought a heavy misfortune; but not for worlds would I have him alive now. Believe me, nothing contributes so much to reconcile me to present and future events, as the reflection that they cannot wound the bosom of a parent, who would keenly feel any degradation I must suffer, and perhaps reflect with bitterness on himself, although he was guided in his choice of Mr. Menville from the best and purest motives, the hope of aggrandizing his children, and preventing those dear objects of his love from feeling those painful sensibilities which a parent must experience in leaving orphans unprovided for. Convinced, therefore, that Providence orders every thing for the best, and that we short-sighted mortals are but ill judges of what is most conducive to our happiness, both here and hereafter, I kiss the rod of correction, and raise my mind above whatever evils it may be my portion to suffer.

And now, my dear Mrs. Bertie, I dispatch this letter immediately, that it may reach you equally as soon as the ill-natured reports in the papers, or the severer intelligence of private hands, who are too apt to multiply the failings of their friends — Adieu, my beloved Charlotte, you will soon hear from me again; till then, believe me,

Your ever affectionate,

EMILY MENVILLE.

LETTER

E E T T E R XXXVIII.

MRS. COLEMORE TO MRS. MENVILLE.

STRANGE reports, my dearest friend, have reached us concerning Mr. Menville and Mrs. Thurkill. Mr. Colemore and myself are dying with anxiety. For Heaven's sake write me a line directly.

My father called at Mr. Shepherd's this morning: he was ill, and could not be seen; Mrs. Shepherd was particularly engaged. Tell me, my dear Mrs. Menville, shall Mr. Colemore, shall I, or both of us come to town; command us instantly, if we can do you either service or pleasure. O! that diabolical girl! But I have time for no more. This goes by a private hand. If you are alive, write, write, I conjure you.

Your faithful

And afflicted,

E. M. COLEMORE.

E E T T E R XXXIX.

MRS. MENVILLE TO MRS. COLEMORE.

YOUR letter, my beloved Mrs. Colemore, is this moment come to hand. How sensibly do I feel your kind concern for me. Rest assured I am perfectly well, indeed I am. Some disagreeable things have happened; and as affairs which concern two families are generally exaggerated,

gerated, you shall have a faithful narrative from me in a day or two: meantime, believe that I am free from any present uneasiness. Mr. Menville is very kind, my sweet Emily perfectly well, and myself: with pleasure I assure you I need not tax the kindness of my friends to afford me any consolation. My best love to your respectable father, mother, and Mr. Colemore. I must be ever

Your obliged
And affectionate,

EMILY MENVILLE.

Lady Hartwill is with me every day, and expresses herself much attached to Mrs. Colemore.

L E T T E R XL.

MRS. MENVILLE TO MRS. COLEMORE.

HOW quick the transitions in this life from one extreme to another! When I wrote my dear Mrs. Colemore last, I was comparatively a happy creature. What am I now! A prisoner in my own apartment, denied the sight of all who sympathized in my distress, and abandoned by my husband. Gracious God! support me; I do not repine, I do not murmur at thy decrees. Enable me to bear my lot with resignation and fortitude; no more I ask. And do you, my generous friends, sit in judgment on my actions; be candid, I conjure you; spare me not, if I have been guilty of error: I am open to conviction,

viction, and will follow your advice. Let me, if possible, retrace the occurrences of the three past days, which appear like a frightful dream, until I am sometimes awakened by fresh sorrows.

On Tuesday last Mr. Menville came into my dressing-room; he walked two or three turns, and seemed at a loss to begin. I looked at him in fearful silence: I saw his mind was agitated. At length he stopped: "Emily, I have a favour to request of you."

"Dear Sir, name your wish."

"Why, my dear, 'tis of a particular nature, and requires all your good sense and good nature to comply with. You know the unhappy situation of Mrs. Thurkill. (I started.) Traded by her husband, rejected by her parents, insulted by the unfeeling world, and without the present means of support, till the trial her husband brings forward is decided; her wretched situation has a claim upon my humanity and generosity, as I am considered answerable for her misfortunes."

He paused. I answered with energy, Doubtless, Sir, *she has a claim* upon both, as an unhappy woman. God forbid I should narrow your heart, or entertain one sentiment of displeasure against the unfortunate. Relieve her, I beseech you; let her not have the sting of poverty added to self-reproach; let her be made independent, that she may not endure the weight of obligation for a small pittance."

He turned from me, again traversed the room, then, collecting more firmness, "I am not disappointed in my expectations of your generosity: but 'tis from *you* she must receive favours. In short,

short, you must permit her to reside here in this house, and treat her as your friend."

"Reside here, in this *house!*" repeated I, with astonishment, "you cannot mean it, sure."

"I do mean it, and shall insist upon it, too; surely I have a right to bring whom I please to my own house."

"Undoubtedly, Sir, you have, if you can reconcile it to your own feelings to insult me, and incur the censure of the world."

"D—n the world! that is only a secondary consideration with me. Yet you may teach that world to respect her."

"I, Sir; I teach the world to respect a woman who has disgraced herself? Impossible. And *why* should I attempt it?"

"To oblige your husband," said he, in a lower key, "to prove your superiority over your sex, to assist the unfortunate, and silence the rancorous tongues of envy and malice."

"Pardon me, Mr. Menville, a step of that kind will only provoke the scandal you wish to avoid. If Mrs. Thurkill was to leave town for a short time, I should think it would be more prudent; and as, thanks to the follies of mankind, new subjects for censure and ridicule arise every day, in a week or two, or less perhaps, *her* particular share in it might be totally forgotten."

"And that is your opinion, is it; and this is all the complaisance I am to expect from you, after paying you the compliment of requesting as a favour what I have a right to demand?"

"That you have an undoubted right, Sir, to introduce whatever person you please into your house, I do not dispute, but I must be permitted
to

to say, I know no power that can oblige *me* to associate with a woman whose character is lost in the world."

"You are wonderfully nice, indeed: it would be well if you were consistently so, if the visits of Lord Longfield were less frequent, and his attentions less noticed."

It is unpardonable in you, Mr. Menville, to make such reflections, which you have too much candour and justice to credit. But, for Heaven's sake, let there be no disagreement between us; tell me how I can oblige you, and not forfeit my own character in the world, and I am ready to comply with your commands."

"I have already told you, Madam," said he, sternly, "that the opinion of the world I despise; but I owe a reparation to the woman, who suffers perhaps unjustly on my account: I have therefore invited her to reside for some time in my house; her being your guest will at least give her credit, and suspend the remarks of the ill-natured and malicious."

"If you have invited Mrs. Thurkill to your house, Sir; if *she* is hardy enough to enter it, and reside here, I must confess I have neither courage nor inclination to face *her*. She will not, therefore, be *my* guest; for the rest you must do as you please."

"'Tis well, Madam," answered he, haughtily, "you will find I *shall* do so. I am only sorry I condescended to ask as a favour, what I am authorized to command."

He left the room, and I remained overcome with surprise and vexation for near two hours, incapable of fixing on any plan for my conduct. The noise of a carriage at the door made me

go to the window. Judge what were my feelings when I saw Mr. Menville hand Mrs. Thurkill into the house. I sunk back in my chair; a violent burst of tears prevented me from fainting. Norton just then entered the room, with all the marks of astonishment in her face. "Lord, Madam! my master has brought home Mrs. Thurkill."

"Well, Norton," said I, trying to recover myself, "is there any thing surprising in Mrs. Thurkill's coming here?"

"O! my dear lady, to be sure you are an angel, you bear every thing; but indeed, Ma'am, every servant in the house knows what a wicked woman she is; besides, Madam, we all see the papers, and there every thing is told, nothing is a secret; and now to come here again. O, what a vile creature she must be."

"Pray, Norton, don't talk in this manner: I must insist upon it, every person in this house treats Mrs. Thurkill with respect."

She turned from me, her eyes full. I heard her mutter, "Impossible!" With as much composure as possible I dressed for dinner. At the usual hour a servant came to acquaint me dinner was on the table. I asked if there was any company.

"Only Mrs. Thurkill, Madam."

"Go then with my compliments to your master and the lady; tell them I am not well to-day, and shall be glad to have a plate of any thing sent to my dressing-room."

The man withdrew.—No laws, human or divine, thought I, can surely oblige me to sit at table with a woman so infamous, who must be devoid of shame and sensibility, to enter this house with such effrontery.

In a short time Norton came in, followed by a servant with a boiled chicken, without any message whatever. I eat what I could: my heart was too full to require much food. About seven o'clock Mr. Menville came up. I trembled. "Your behaviour, Madam, is insupportable. You may think your disobedience to my wishes, and rudeness to a lady, are perhaps meritorious; but I must tell you plainly, if you will not see *my* friends, you shall not see *your's*, and I shall give orders accordingly."

"As you please, Sir," I replied, with an assumed composure; "those friends I call mine would doubtless desert me voluntarily, could I be guilty of the meanness you require. Hear me, Sir, with patience: had you brought the poorest girl of character to your table, or as an inmate, you would have found me obedient to every wish you could express. Since the first hour I gave you my hand, I have lived but to please you: but there are bounds even in the duty from a wife to her husband, to give a sanction to infamy, to be a companion, a mean servile companion to a woman, who, conscious of the injuries she has done me, must despise and triumph over me. No, Sir; if such are your expectations, I must say, I neither can nor will comply with them. What right has she to expect I should forfeit the esteem of my friends, and my own approbation, to oblige her?"

"Say no more, Madam," cried he. "I shall cut the matter very short. Since you don't chuse to eat with me, you must have your solitary meals here: and there is one thing in which your scrupulous, your partial duty *must* obey me."

"Name it, Sir."

"That you do not presume to go out of this house, or see any company, without my leave."

"I promise you, Sir, strictly to obey you."

He walked sullenly out of the room.—Norton came and informed me general orders were given that I was not at home to any body. I made no comments. Yesterday they were at Richmond; this day they are again gone out. My eyes followed them, and my tears would flow, yet I endeavour to repress them for my dear child's sake, who seems entirely forgotten by her cruel father.

Surely never was such a strange infatuation, such an uncommon step, as to bring that woman here to brave the world, and confirm her infamy! Could they not be contented with residing at a distance! Was it necessary to humble and mortify me! What have I done to deserve it! Did I not, from the moment I assented to my father's wishes; did I not from that moment devote the whole attention of my mind to study Mr. Menville's pleasure; did I ever cease in every expression of affection and gratitude, for his kindness to me and mine, that an affectionate and obliged heart could dictate! O! no, I can acquit myself; I feel no self-reproach from the neglect of any duties. Let me then, by patience and resignation, convince Mr. Menville I merit better treatment; and his justice will one day render me back that affection which a temporary madness has deprived me of.

To you, my dear Mrs. Colemore, Mr. Colemore, to your respectable parents, I appeal; by your judgment I will direct mine.
Let

Let me know, without delay, how far I have conducted myself right; and if I have erred, I will endeavour to retrace my steps, and pursue a different path. I cannot address Mrs. Bertie in my present situation; but to you I will constantly write; it will be one of my greatest pleasures.—Adieu, my dear Mrs. Colemore, God bless all you love and honour.
Your affectionate,

EMILY MENVILLE.

I beg and entreat Mr. Colemore may not by any method, directly nor indirectly, apply to Mr. Menville. Time will do every thing.

L E T T E R XLI.

MRS COLEMORE TO MRS MENVILLE.

MY dear, amiable, and much-injured friend, your letter has made us all miserable; but do not you be unhappy; virtue and goodness like your's is Heaven's peculiar care: doubt not but your trials will turn out gloriously for you. My father bids me say every thing that is respectful and affectionate for him. He says you have conducted yourself with the highest degree of propriety. The duty and respect you owe to your own character justifies you in refusing to comply with Mr. Menville's request, of being an associate with infamy. Go on then, my dear friend, in following the dictates of your own judgment, be assured you cannot err; a mind uniformly good must always act rightly.

What effrontery, indeed, must that creature have, to enter your house, and court your presence; and how can it be possible Mr. Menville, who could admire you for your virtues, can be enamoured of one so directly the reverse? But the infatuation will not last long, be assured it will not.

This morning we were surprised to hear Mr. and Mrs. Shepherd are going to leave Sudbury, and reside at Boulogne, and he is accordingly disposing of all his effects. It is an odd step. I cannot think delicacy, or mortification at their daughter's baseness, has suggested it: they have more substantial reasons, I believe; and I much fear your husband will suffer more ways than one by this artful, worthless family. Yet I will not anticipate evils.

I could write volumes, my dear Mrs. Menville, in your praise, and in execrations against the wretch who has interrupted your domestic happiness; but my spirits are so agitated, and my hand trembles so much from indignation, that I must conclude, with only assuring you, that you have the most perfect admiration of this family, who find it impossible to direct good sense and a heart like your's. Pursue steadily the path you have chosen; you cannot be directed to a better. Mr. Colemore will observe all your commands; but remember, if his assistance can ever be useful, he will rejoice to be *active* in obeying them. Believe me, with admiration and respect,

Your faithful

And affectionate,

E. M. COLEMORE.

You must not chide me, but I could not repress the inclination I felt to acquaint Lady
Hartwill

Hartwill with your present situation. She loves you, and must be uneasy. I have communicated in confidence, therefore you need not be apprehensive.

L E T T E R XLII.

ROBERT MARTIN, ESQ.

TO JOHN CHAMBERS, ESQ.

WHAT will be the end of this business I know not, but the devil has put the strangest scheme into Menville's head sure that ever was formed; he has actually carried Thurkill's abandoned wife home to his house, denies his own to all company, and publicly drives about with his mistress. Did'st ever hear of such an extraordinary step? Upon my soul I could kill the fellow for behaving so ill to such a woman! Some way or other I *will* see her, if I am obliged to visit his despicable paramour, and court her favour. The town talks of nothing else but Menville's shutting up his wife, and placing his mistress at the head of his table. The man is either mad or a fool to act in such an absurd manner. But it is near their dinner-hour; I will drop in as if by chance.

12 at night.

Oh! Jack, I have such a scene to relate: never surely was there such another woman! But I will not anticipate: take things in order as follows:

M 3.

Between

Between four and five I strolled into Bedford-Square, and as luck would have it, before I had got six yards towards the house, was overtaken by Merville himself.

"Ah! Martin," cried he, looking a little confused, "where are you going?"

"Why, faith, I intended calling in, and taking my mutton at your house, if I found you at home."

"We are luckily met then; but," said he, smiling, "do you know an old acquaintance is at my house?"

"What you mean Mrs. Thurkill," answered I, carelessly. "Yes, yes, every body knows what a happy fellow you are, a wife and a mistress in one house. You manage devilish clever to keep them together without pulling caps."

"O! you give me more credit than I deserve. The truth is, my stately wife has shut herself up in her own apartment, and does not condescend to honour us with her company."

"Natural enough," returned I, carelessly; "few women like rivals."

We now came to the door. I entered, and was introduced to Mrs. Thurkill. With all her assurance, she blushed as I drew near, and muttered some words I could not understand. Dinner was served up, the lady took the head of the table. I could not help venting some inward curses at her impudence. I found they were going to the play. I stayed till they went off, followed them, resisted all their intreaties to make a trio, and within ten minutes after the coach drew off, returned to the house.

"I have left something in the drawing-room,"
said

said I to the porter, "and shall write a letter in your master's library."

I passed him, and run up stairs. I proceeded directly to Mrs. Menville's dressing-room, and tapped at the door.—"Come in," said a low voice.

I turned the lock, and entered: she started, her face in a glow.

"Mr. Martin!"

"Pardon me, Madam," stammered I, in some confusion, "pardon me for this intrusion."

"I know not, Sir," answered she, "by whose permission you took the liberty to enter into my apartment; but I am not just now in a situation to receive visitors; am very far from being well, and therefore must decline the honour you intend me."

She arose to ring the bell. I caught her hand.

"Hear me, Madam, for a few minutes."

"Excuse me, Sir," endeavouring to withdraw her hand; "particular circumstances in which I am involved, will not permit me to receive the visits of any gentlemen in the absence of Mr. Menville."

"I know, Madam, your situation," cried I, with eagerness, "I know you are infamously treated, that an unworthy woman usurps your place: and will you suffer such indignities tamely? Will you not permit a man devoted to your service to rescue you from a yoke so shamefully laid on? Will you not retaliate on wretches who destroy your peace of mind? I am devoted to your service: my life, my fortune are in your hands, dispose of them as you please. Whatever are your commands, I live but to obey you."

She had thrown herself into a chair. I uttered all I said with such rapidity, as precluded all interruption. When I stopt, she looked at me, and with a smile of ineffable disdain, "These then are the friendships of men of the world. *You*, Sir, are a *friend* of my husband's; you force yourself into my presence; you offer yourself as my avenger; you persuade me to retaliate supposed injuries. Good Heaven! how depraved are men! But you are mistaken in the outset of this business, Sir; I have no injuries to complain of; I want no avenger; *I have a husband*, consequently no man's life or fortune are necessary to me. It is my wish to be exempt from company for some time; I am accountable to no one for my reasons. I do not admit my own particular friends; of course my husband's associates have no right to be offended, if included in a general order."

She again tried to get at the bell: I respectfully prevented her. "Deign for one moment to hear me, Madam, and *I will leave you*. I know you will suffer a thousand insults and humiliations; I know also Mr. Menville has lost immense sums at play; that the connexions he has formed will ruin him, and you will be involved in the general wreck. Only remember in me you have a friend, who would die to save you from pain and disgrace."

She interrupted me. "Suffer me, Mr. Martin, to interrupt you. My character you have entirely mistaken: *I am a wife*, Sir. Whatever may be my husband's fate, I will share it with him; nor shrink from any troubles he is involved in: added to this, I am a mother. These sacred characters, the duties they imprint on my mind, shall ever regulate my conduct through

through life. I wish to believe myself obliged to your kind attention, Sir, because I should be sorry to think any man so depraved, so abandoned in principle, as to insult a woman he thinks defenceless and unhappy."

I was struck dumb, Jack; never did the angel look so much like a divinity as now. I looked, I gazed, I trembled, and adored. "Far be it from me, Madam, to insult you," I replied, after some hesitation; "whatever were my ambitious hopes when I entered this house, you have entirely subdued them: I leave you with different ideas, I own, but with increased respect and admiration. Were all women like you, men would be rational and happy beings. Henceforth I will be a true and disinterested friend, ever ready to promote your happiness, and to respect your situation. Pardon this intrusion, which never will be repeated without your permission."

"Now," cried the angel, with a smile of inexpressible sweetness, "now I see a right principle breaking from the follies and fashions of the day. Encourage it, Mr. Martin, for your own sake: believe me, you will find more real satisfaction from one approving thought, one just and generous action, than any other gratifications could afford you: and whenever Mr. Menville introduces Mr. Martin as *his friend*, I shall be most ready to acknowledge him as mine also."

With a profound bow, unable to utter a word, I took my leave.

Tell me, Jack, do you believe such another woman is in being? Laugh at me, if you please; but, upon my soul, I believe I shall reform; for I would sooner be *esteemed* by her, cold as the

word is, than *loved* by any other woman. The few words of approbation that fell from her lips, the heavenly smile that accompanied them, spoke volumes to my heart. I will be all she wishes me to be, her zealous friend; and every scheme I can devise shall be to punish the infamous woman that insults and shuts her up from the world.

Henceforth you will hear of me as a new man. I detest my former vices and follies. I will cultivate the acquaintance of Lord Longfield and Lady Hartwill; through them I may yet be of service to this charming creature. 'Tis evident from the impressions I have received, that women, lovely women, may make us what they please. No man would be a villain, if that captivating sex would but respect themselves. But I am a traitor to the cause, though a convert myself: I must not betray my friends; yet, Chambers, *there is* a fascination in virtue; the greatest libertine must acknowledge it, and *I am* convinced of it. Adieu for the present.

ROBERT MARTIN.

L E T T E R XLIII.

CAPTAIN HARLEY TO MISS ELLIS.

I STILL address you, my sweet friend, by the name of Ellis, though probably by this time that name is lost in one more dear to you. If so, accept my warmest congratulations; and may the happiness you so well deserve ever be your portion.

When

When I wrote you last, I thought myself settled for some time; but poor Mr. Neville has had a relapse; he is certainly consumptive; and Mrs. Neville is also in a very indifferent state of health. We have therefore determined to take a journey to Spa; and as we shall travel by short easy stages, I hope they will derive both benefit and pleasure from the expedition. Their excess of gratitude makes me uneasy; for, after all, what are their obligations? The trifling services I can render them in pecuniary matters are greatly over-balanced by the pleasure I receive in their company, and the delightful reflection of having preserved them from despair and death. I have assured them their children shall be my peculiar care, and I will adopt them for my own. I shall never marry, and have no relations that can make any claims on me, either by affinity or want of assistance; consequently I cannot better dispose of the fortune generosity bestowed than in relieving the unfortunate: I consider it a debt incumbent on me to pay, and not as bestowing obligations.

And now, my good friend, permit me to thank you for all your kind communications. I impatiently expect your next packets, that I may know the life of the dearest and best of women is out of danger. My anxieties are not to be expressed: her health and happiness engross all my wishes. Some attachments of a similar nature, when deprived of hope, may be subdued, but mine never can; since it is those virtues which she hourly practices; it is the warm friend, the dutiful daughter, the affectionate wife, the generous, humane feelings; it is, in short, a mind which angels may view with delight, inclosed in a form every one must admire,

that

that is imprinted on my heart, never, never to be erased. Happy Menville! to have the power of adding to the felicity of such a woman!

Clayton has written to England, to make some enquiry about Mr. and Mrs. Neville's family. They have also wrote to Mr. and Mrs. Wellford, from whom they have not heard these three years. The uncertain fate of poor Frances gives them much uneasiness. For my own part, I should rather be inclined to think her dead than alive; and indeed, in her situation, it appears impossible she could have got off unknown, or remain concealed in the neighbourhood, much less that she could have settled elsewhere. I rather conclude she threw herself into the river. But of this no more. If your letters arrive, they will be forwarded to me; and the moment we are settled at Spa, I shall write. Adieu, my amiable friend. Present my best respects to your worthy parents; also to the gentleman who is honoured with your approbation. I trust he will not deprive me of my charming correspondent, as I can no where repair the loss I should in that case sustain. Believe me, with truth and sincerity,

Dear Madam,

Your ever obliged,

FREDERIC HARLEY.

L E T T E R XLIV.

MRS. MENVILLE TO MRS. COLEMORE.

A WHOLE week has past, my dear friend, without any alteration in my situation: I have
not

not seen Mr. Menville; and your kind letter is the only consolation I have received, except the caresses of my sweet infant. I have this instant been honoured with a letter from Lady Hartwilt, in consequence of your communications. She is highly provoked at Mr. Menville's conduct, and thinks I am *too submissive*. She says she will present herself every day at my door, in the hope of meeting Mr. Menville, or obtaining admittance, and requests I will exert more spirit, and *insist* upon seeing my friends.

I am much obliged to her Ladyship for the kind interest she takes in my vexations; but as to exerting more spirit, what would it avail me, but to provoke my husband's displeasure, and afford him a pretext to use me ill. No, my dear, it is the duty of a wife to be submissive, in points which affect not her honour or reputation: there only she has a right to resist, and *there* I exerted myself with as much resolution as I could assume, and shall persevere: in every other point he has a claim to my obedience; and I will at least have the merit of a patient sufferer.

The trial is come, my dear Mrs. Colemore, and my boasted fortitude is put to the proof. You shall find I will not shrink from my hard fate, but prove for once that theory and practice are inseparable in a mind resolved.

Mr. Menville has just left me. The purport of his visit was as follows: "The situation which your perverseness has placed me in, Madam, is so extremely disagreeable, I can bear it no longer: you must therefore leave this house. (I started with terror.) I have an estate in Cornwall, which I purchased some time ago. There is an old mansion-house on it, tolerably furnished.

furnished. A bailiff, a woman-servant, and a boy live in it, which are as many servants as you will want, except, indeed, you choose to take a girl to wait on you."

Astonishment and terror had kept me silent till now, when I exclaimed, "What, Sir, am I not permitted then to take Norton with me?"

"No, Madam, I absolutely exclude her: your nurse-maid may go to attend the child. And I must tell you, I expect you should maintain yourself and servants you take from the liberal allowance I made you on my marriage for pin-money, but which now must procure you the necessaries of life. The wife who disputes her husband's pleasure, has no right to expect indulgence from him."

I could no longer restrain my tears; they flowed in abundance.

"Tears are ridiculous, mere female artifice, which can make no impression upon me. If you are disposed to comply with my wishes, say so at once; if not, prepare for your journey."

Indignation now took place of sorrow. "Your alternative, Sir, requires no deliberation. I will preserve my honour, my character untainted for *my own* sake; not, Sir, from respect to a man who can so cruelly sacrifice an unoffending wife, consign her and his child to solitude and comparative poverty, without a single cause on her side that can justify such treatment. I am ready, therefore, to prepare for my journey."

"It is well, Madam; the day after to-morrow the carriage will be at the door by seven o'clock. I will write immediately, to prepare Bailey for your reception." Saying this, he flung out of the room.

Well,

Well, my dear Mrs. Colemore, do you not approve of my spirit? Believe me, I will endeavour to deserve the good opinion of my partial friends, by my fortitude in bearing inevitable evils.—What part of Cornwall I am to inhabit, I know it: but, as I do not suppose he will have the cruelty to prohibit my writing, you shall very soon be informed. As to living upon my yearly allowance, it gives me not a moment's thought; it will be amply sufficient for all my wants. My chief concern is to part with poor Norton; but I cannot help it, and I hope she will soon get a better place. I shall take the liberty to refer her to you for a character: she is a very worthy creature, and I know will be grieved at leaving me. I do not like my nurse maid *very* much; but, as Mr. Menville mentioned her going, I *will* take her: I suppose I may be at liberty to part with her hereafter, if she behaves improperly.

And now, my beloved friends, with a thousand good wishes for your uninterrupted happiness, I close up my correspondence from London. If you do not hear from me within a fortnight, be not uneasy; depend upon it I shall do very well, even should I be debarred what is now the chief comfort of my life, a correspondence with you, which yet, I hope, will not be the case. God bless my dear Mrs. Colemore, prays,

Her truly affectionate,

EMILY MENVILLE.

Norton is just come up. She tells me, her master's valet reported in the kitchen, that he and his master should leave England in a fortnight;—Mrs. Thurkill, too, I suppose. Oh! my dear, surely, surely it is hard; but I must learn to bear.

LETTER

L E T T E R XLV.

ROBERT MARTIN, ESQ.

TO JOHN CHAMBERS, ESQ.

CURSE upon that infamous wretch and her infatuated paramour! What think ye, Jack, they have driven that lovely woman from her house; yes, Mrs. Menville is gone, I know not where. This morning I called at the door: the porter told me his master was not at home, and his lady gone out of town. "What, to Sudbury?" questioned I. "No, Sir, a great way off, above two hundred miles, I heard Mrs. Norton say."

"Mrs. Norton is gone with her, I suppose."
—"No, Sir; she was discharged the same day my lady set off; only the nurse-maid and Miss Emily went with her."

"And you don't know the name of the place?"—"No, Sir."

"Nor where Mrs. Norton lives?"—"No, Sir."

"Well, I shall call on your master to-morrow."

I walked off, called at Lady Hartwill's; they were equally surprised and vexed, but had no intelligence. I then sauntered into Hyde Park; I met Lord Longfield on horseback; I repeated the above to him; he was greatly affected.

"Menville behaves very ill," said he; "he has certainly driven her away through the instigation of that worthless woman he is connected with. However, I hope she is with her friends,
and

and that we shall shortly hear she is in a more eligible situation than exposed to their insults."

He rode off; I pursued my walk, when I happened to meet Jack Williams. "So, Martin," cried he, "what moralizing on the follies of the great world around you, or waiting a summons from some kind fair one?"

"Neither," replied I, smiling; "my thoughts were turned on a far distant spot, in all probability, and I am equally insensible to the locality of the place, or the objects that surround me."

"Poor Martin!" exclaimed Williams, why thou art far gone, indeed, *in la belle passion*; but you are devilish secret; come, let me know who is your Helen."

"When I have found her," returned I, "you shall know: at present I have no secrets to reveal."

"Ah! you are a sly dog," cried he: "but what a cursed piece of work your friend Menville has made with his amour. He is pretty well done up, I hear, has sent his wife among the tin-mines in Cornwall, and is preparing to go abroad with Mrs. Thurkill."

"Mrs. Menville gone to Cornwall!" said I; "where did you pick up that intelligence?"

"From my servant, who is brother to Menville's valet."

"Dear Jack," cried I, eagerly, "for Heaven's sake employ your servant to learn, if possible, where Mrs. Menville resides: I will make the fellow's fortune, if he succeeds."

"O! your servant," said Williams; "my good friend Martin, you have no secrets, to be sure; but we can see which way the needle points in the compass: yet have a care; a married woman."

man under her circumstances is delicately situated, and ought to be doubly respected."

"Fear not, Jack: I swear to you I would not injure Mrs. Menville for the world: I *do* respect her, and will serve her at the hazard of my life."

Williams stared at me as if he could scarce give me credit, but assured me he would endeavour to obtain further intelligence."

Leaving Hyde Park, I strolled down to White's, Major Fermor was there. "Pray, Mr. Martin, is it true your friend Menville is parted from his wife? I heard last night he had sent her down to an old castle, on the sea-coast, in Cornwall."

"I assure you I know nothing of the matter," replied I; "I hear she is gone out of town; but I see very little of Menville."

"I think," resumed the Major, "he is in the high road to ruin: 'tis said he has lost immense sums at pharo; in all probability Thurkill will recover pretty considerable damages, and he will have the lady to support at no small expence, I dare say."

"I am sorry for him," said I, carelessly.

"I am sorry for his wife," returned he; "for they say she is a very amiable woman."

Thus, you see, the happiness and fortune of the family are likely to be entirely destroyed by an insidious female.—I am now going in search of Williams, for I can think of nothing but Mrs. Menville and her injuries.

Well, Jack, I am now on the wing for Cornwall, though, faith, I know not what I am to do there: but here I cannot stay.—Last night I obtained the wished-for intelligence. Menville's valet is much in his master's secrets: a lucky circumstance for me. Mrs. Menville is at a
castle

castle called Trewarn, on the sea-coast, about five miles from Penzance, and almost opposite Scilly. Next week Menville and his woman (O, how I hate her!) will set off for the Continent, previous to the trial. All this is a great secret. Perhaps you may see the delectable pair in Paris: I wish them both at the devil with all my heart. To-morrow I set off for Cornwall: I know nothing of the country; but when I am settled, you shall hear from me again. Williams has promised me his correspondence; and thro' the means of his servant, I shall have every intelligence I wish for: I have made it worth the fellow's while to oblige me. Believe me on all occasions,

Dear Jack,

Your's most faithfully,

ROBERT MARTIN.

L E T T E R XLVI.

MRS. BERTIE TO MRS. MENVILLE.

HOW truly kind and attentive in you, my dearest friend, to write, and enable me to support the astonishing news which met my eye the very same day your letter arrived. My grief, my indignation are not to be expressed; yet you are still an angel, can bear injuries with patience, and vindicate the wretches who have wronged you. Good Heavens! what a strong mind is your's. You say, "It is only a temporary alienation of Mr. Menville's affection, and that he is *very kind* to you. Kind, indeed! Is there any

any merit in his behaviour, when you receive him with tenderness, and avoid even a reproachful look? But let me not offend you by reflections you will not permit. Since your lot is drawn, you will have an opportunity, my charming Emily, of proving your worth and fortitude. Grant Heaven, your trials may be short, and that Mr. Menville may every day grow more sensible of your merit.

We have been at Spa only three days, after a tedious journey, for going through Paris is a round-about way, and the roads are so indifferent, and the accommodations so bad, that really to those who have only been accustomed to the roads in England, every thing puts you in an ill-humour, especially when you have valetudinarians with you. However, here we are; and I am already much pleased with this place. I hear there are many English families of fashion here, and more expected. The situation of our lodgings is delightful, and the terms remarkably reasonable.

I have been teased into a promise of giving my hand to Sir Charles within this month; yet I am sure I have little encouragement to do so, when I reflect, that the most deserving woman in the world cannot keep the affections of a man who once appeared to be the most affectionate of husbands. In short, I am out of humour with the whole sex but my uncle: he is really a valuable character; and it is with grief I see his health declining fast: I fear no change of climate will be found beneficial to him.

You judge with your usual good sense, my dear Mrs. Menville, how little capable we are of knowing what is best for us; and that consideration

sideration should enable us to bear disappointments, which often cloud our happiest prospects, with resignation: but yet there are some evils which lay hold of the heart, and which all our fortitude is unable to support at the time. I speak from experience; the sting of self-reproach, a consciousness of deserving the misfortunes which overwhelm us, is a situation so deplorable, so mortifying, as scarce any bosom of sensibility can support with any tolerable patience. From such insupportable reflections, my dear Mrs. Menville, you are happily free, and may look forward with hopes that your virtues, however severely tried for a time, will undoubtedly meet their just reward. I shall most impatiently expect your next letter: grant kind Heaven, that *your* happiness may be restored, or I shall have very little inclination to change the name of

Your ever affectionate,
And faithful,

C. BERTIE.

My uncle, aunt, and Sir Charles beg their best respects; they are equally anxious and uneasy with myself. Hasten to us good news, pray.

L E T T E R XLVII.

MRS. MENVILLE TO MRS. COLEMORE.

I AM now safely lodged within my prison walls; such I may call it, since I have received
an

an intimation that this castle is to be the boundary of my walks: I shall most strictly observe the injunction. I am told this house is about five miles from a great post town, and no restraint has been ordered on my letters; therefore I hope to enjoy the correspondence of my friends.

We were four days on our journey, the last day through a country bleak and barren, with a number of tin-mines; every thing had a frightful and solitary appearance. When I arrived near the castle, the sea, at a little distance, was rough and foaming, the rain poured in torrents, whilst the roughness of the roads, and the very high winds whistling round our ears, and almost drowning the noise of the wheels, added horror to the distress of my mind. I looked at my child, then in a sweet sleep; tears involuntarily flowed from my eyes. I turned my eyes on Ann, the maid, who supported her: she was unmoved; there was an expression in her countenance that surprised me; a confidence and an air of triumph, I thought: yet why should she triumph! her situation is unpleasant enough: I must banish the idea.

At length we arrived at the castle; a long dark avenue of trees led to it; the walls were high; a large gate-way opened into a court, where the castle stood, an old irregular building in front, with very small windows, and a tower at each end, with a sort of battlements on the top. A great bell at the gate, which the coachman rang, (for I was not permitted to have a footman,) brought out the master of the castle, whose name is Bailey; he bowed with some respect, preceded the carriage to the inner door, and assisted me into the house. We entered a
large

large old-fashioned hall, and I was shewn into a spacious parlour, the furniture of which had been yellow damask, but the colour was almost entirely gone; and some of the high-backed chairs were rather the worse for time. A decent looking woman made her appearance, and asked what I would please to have for supper. "She had a nice fowl in the house, should she roast it?" I answered in the affirmative. Bailey then told me, "We have orders, Madam, to obey you in every thing within the castle; but master desires you may not go beyond the castle wall and gardens; therefore I hope your Ladyship wont be offended to find all the doors locked."

"By no means," I replied; "you must do your duty. I came here to enjoy solitude, and have no wish to exceed the limits of the gardens."

The man looked pleased.

"Lord!" cries Ann, "and must I be kept a prisoner too?"

"Not a prisoner," said Bailey; "there is a great deal of ground belonging to the house, and you have a fine view of the sea from the terrace, and can see the ships pass very near."

She muttered something, and turning to me, "Shall I see about the beds, Madam?"

"I will accompany you," answered I.

Accordingly we ascended a large oak stair-case, the stairs brown and shining, so as to make it dangerous, without holding by the banister, to walk up or down. The woman, whose name is Grace, shewed me into a gallery, and opened a door, which led to a suite of three large and lofty rooms. The furniture had been rich, but was gone much to decay; and the beds were
remark-

remarkably high, and all made of oak, shining like the stairs, and carved with the figures of birds and beasts. In short, the whole had a very gloomy and melancholy appearance: it chilled my heart, but I said nothing. Ann was loud in expressing her discontent; so much so, that Grace cried out, "Sure, if Madam don't complain, I think, Mistress, you need not grumble. Some of the finest gentlefolks in the county have lived here; and it is the grandest house for a good way round; aye, by many a mile so it is."

The wind, which had been very high all day, had increased greatly; it now rattled all the windows, roared in the great wide chimnies, and, in short, made such a tremendous noise, that it really inspired me with horror. I walked into the apartment intended for my dressing-room; and going to the windows, had a view of the sea, which was the most awful sight I had ever beheld. The waves rose to an amazing height, and came foaming towards the shore with a terrible noise: the sky looked black, and all the coast round barren, desolate, and rocky. I turned from a scene which added new terrors to my soul; and having given orders about the linen and other necessaries, I returned to the parlour, which, gloomy as it really was, appeared comfortable in comparison to the rooms above. I eat my solitary supper, and reluctantly prepared for bed at eleven o'clock. My sweet Emily appeared not the worse for the fatigue of travelling, and, with her maid, slept in an adjoining room. The whistling of the wind, the roar of the sea, and a heavy rain, which beat against the windows, were but too much in unison with my mind, and precluded all inclination

to rest. About seven in the morning I dropped into a doze, which was soon interrupted by a frightful dream, that threw me into a fit of trembling, and I awaked under every impression of horror. Bell there was none, and I began to remember I had no woman to assist me, I therefore got up, and was putting on my clothes, when Ann came into my room. "Lord, Ma'am, are you going to dress yourself?"

"Yes, Ann, I have no servant now to dress me."

"I can assist you, Ma'am."

"No, I wish to accustom myself to what necessity has imposed upon me: I will therefore do every thing I *can* for myself. I only request your care of my dearest child."

She left the room, and I soon got on my clothes. I see in this trifling instance how easily we accommodate ourselves to indulgencies, and multiply artificial wants. Before I was married, I never had a servant to dress me: my mother always made it a rule I should do every thing for myself about my own person. After I became the wife of Mr. Menville, things were different, and I readily fell in with the establishment he made, and found it a pleasant thing to be attended; yet I did not give more fatigue to my woman than I could help. Now, see the difference; no sooner was I deprived of a *femme de chambre*, than I felt great difficulties in doing things for myself. Ann assisted me in the journey, because she slept in the same room: but the morning after my arrival here, I found it very awkward to dress myself. Thus, it is very evident, we create wants for ourselves, and feel inconveniencies which a small exertion might enable us to remove.

I am now more reconciled to my situation. Bailey is very civil, Grace very attentive to my orders, the view of the sea is grown familiar to me, and I generally sit in my dressing-room. The grounds are extensive. There is a lawn behind the house, which has a terrace on the side, which looks towards the sea, and a pleasant dry walk. There are two large and good gardens; also a very fine orchard, which they say is seven acres. In short, there is room enough for exercise and amusement, to a mind at ease, and where you are not sensible you *must not* go beyond certain limits. The mind, my dear Mrs. Colemore, is refractory, and scorns to be confined.

I have this day written a short letter to Mrs. Bertie; and without saying a syllable of Mr. Menville's conduct, merely told her I was well, and with my family removed to this castle, promising to write her more fully another day. Should my situation be known, and noised abroad in the world, which it *never shall* by me; should she hear of it, at least she will be satisfied of my health; and I endeavoured to raise my spirits, and write cheerfully.

I have now been here five days. Every thing is uniformly the same. If, by any means, you can learn how Mr. Menville disposes of himself, it would, I own, be a gratification to me; but let not Mr. Colemore, by any means, appear to be curious, or draw observation by his enquiries. Nothing could give me equal pain to the idea of his being involved in any disagreeable situation by his kindness to me.— Heaven bless you, my dear Mrs. Colemore, and all you love and honour.

I am ever your affectionate,

EMILY MENVILLE.

L E T T E R XLVIII.

ROBERT MARTIN, ESQ.

TO JOHN CHAMBERS, ESQ.

WELL, my friend, here I am in this remote part of the world, after a thousand hair-breadth escapes; a cursed rugged road and dreary prospects, except now and then you stumble on some good family mansions. Yet this country abounds in riches, and the tin mines are an inexhaustible source of wealth to the proprietors, where they turn out productive. I am now within a mile and a half of Trewarn Castle; no nearer accommodations could I obtain, and these I have are bad enough; my landlord, whose name is Tregegle, is concerned in the pilchard fishery, and I was compelled to listen a full hour to the whole process of the business, before I could obtain any account of Trewarn Castle. At length my patience was rewarded with the following intelligence.

“Lack-a-day, sir, the castle was once a fine place, and belonged, time out of mind, to the Penrickard family; but the last good Sir William went to London, and brought down a fine town madam, with a mort of pride, but no money; so when her came here, her wouldn't see the tenants, nor visit the Squires wives; so then every body hated her, and so then she would go back to London, and sure enough she made the good Sir William go along too; sure and sure, there wasn't a dry eye in the parish, when he was lugged away. I was but

a youngster then, sir, for 'tis thirty years ago they went away, and there madam played such pranks in the great city, that in about ten years or so, they were all ruined, and so this estate of Trewarne, sir, was sold to one and then to another, but no gentlefolks ever came to live in it; the grounds are all let to farmers, and now it belongs to a great India man, worth a power of money, they say, but he has never been here, so the castle has nobody in it but two servants."

"Pray," said I, when this tale was finished, "pray do you know the servants?"

"Bless you, master, why I knows Will. Bailey, who has the care of the place, as well as myself; I ha'n't seen'em for this week past, but he often calls here."

"I should like to know that person, for very like the great India man may have no objection to sell the estate, and I want to buy one in this neighbourhood."

"Oh! please God, master, you shall see'en when he comes, I wishes with all my heart some great family would live there, it would be a main good thing for the neighbourhood."

I have walked this day twice round the walls, and the gardens which are very near the sea, but have not seen any body, man nor woman. You may suppose I do not appear exactly as Bob Martin, Esq. no, no, I am a middle aged plain dressed man, and have borrowed thy name Jack, so I am Mr. Chambers, at your service. My fellow is faithful I know, and I am sure will make no discoveries. If I can get acquainted with this Bailey, and can find entrance into the house, it shall go hard but I will see the angel. Heavens! what a dreary place, I am
really

really in the horrors myself, though I do not repent my Quixotic expedition, if I can be of service to my divine princess, now confined in the enchanted castle. What servants she has with her, I know not, only the nurse maid left town with her, but doubtless she has some person to attend her here. 'Tis plain her abode in Cornwall is kept very secret, since Bailey has not communicated it to his friend Tregegle, I therefore ask but few questions, that I may give no cause for suspicion.

Jack, I have seen Mrs. Menville; this morning I was fauntering round the garden walls, when I saw a woman, whom I knew to be her, walking slowly on a terrace, as I suppose it must be; I debated with myself whether I should make myself known or not. On second thoughts, I conceived it would be better to write a line, I therefore contented myself with straining my eyes after the charming creature, without seeing her face, for her bonnet was drawn over it; I have accordingly wrote, and as it is a fine evening, perhaps she may be induced to take another solitary walk. If you write, direct for William Chambers, Esq to be left at the Post-Office, Penzance, Cornwall,

Your's, faithfully,

ROBERT MARTIN.

L E T T E R XLIX.

MRS. MENVILLE TO MRS. COLFMORE.

MY dearest friend, what will become of me? I have this day received the following
 N 3 letter

letter from Mr. Menville, I copy it, let it speak for itself.

Madam,

Compelled by your unaccountable caprice and little complaisance to the wishes of your husband, to act in many respects different from my intentions, you have only yourself to thank for all the disagreeable consequences of your obstinacy; therefore, without any ceremony I must inform you, my affairs are in a very deranged state; that I have been obliged to mortgage some of my estates, and sell others for present supply. The one at Sudbury is encumbered with your settlement, as well as bound for the payment of your present annual allowance. That allowance you will enjoy for your life; I do not therefore see any cause why I should lose present advantages to myself, and secure future ones to a person that has too plainly proved she had no affection for me. I therefore, madam, am under the necessity of requiring you to give up that settlement my imprudent fondness made you. My solicitor will wait on you in a few days, to direct you how to act. Your present income shall be punctually paid, and when I leave England, as I am about to do, you will be released from the restrictions you are now under, and may see what friends you please. A compliance with my orders will oblige me, and perhaps hereafter greatly benefit yourself.

WILLIAM MENVILLE.

Well, my dear Mrs. Colemore, you have now perused the letter, which has almost annihilated

hilated me, nevertheless, I have sufficient spirits left in such a cause, to do myself justice, and after mature deliberation, the following is a copy of my answer.

TO W. MENVILLE, ESQ.

Sir,

To complain or recriminate, would be entirely useless now, when you have pre-judged me, and impute to me consequences my own heart acquits me of being answerable for. I shall therefore make no protestations of affection which meets no credit *from you*, but leave to heaven and your own conscience, the vindication and justice I know myself entitled to expect. The contents of your letter, sir, I answer as a mother (who is no longer considered as a wife) ought to do. There is every probability to believe *I* may never be in possession of the settlement you so generously, at the time, and voluntarily thought proper to secure for me; very far from me is the wish to profit by it; but, sir, I have a daughter, you seem to have forgot that she is your's also; have I a right to give away the property of my children? surely not; what is really and truly mine, I can and will dispose of at your pleasure. The annual allowance I now receive, I willingly resign, and will make it over as your solicitor shall direct; I will trust to providence and my own industry for the support of myself and child, nor ever tax your justice to give us a single shilling; this is all I can or will agree to; I never will give up my settlement, which may benefit my family hereafter; I *must*, I *will* be a mother. I can submit to poverty myself,
but

but I will guard against it for those I leave behind me. Be assured, sir, there is nothing respecting myself only, which I would not do, to convince you of my affection; but there are more relative obligations than one, and it will be my only consolation in the hour of death to reflect, that I have strictly endeavoured to perform my duty in every situation, and if I err, the error is in judgment, and not from the heart.

I am, sir,
your truly affectionate,
and faithful wife,

EMILY MENVILLE.

When I write with courage, and revolt against oppression, I know I may expect your approbation; 'tis a painful task to be compelled thus to refuse a husband's wishes, but when I consider that he would wrong his child to procure the means of gratification for a worthless woman, surely I am justified in my denial. How his affairs can be so deranged, I cannot think. We doubtless lived at a great expence, but I was always told much below his fortune; besides the time was so short, it was impossible he could receive any material hurt from it. I never understood Mr. Menville had the least propensity to gaming, and was the whole ten thousand pounds awarded against him for damages on Mr Thurkill's account, I should not suppose there could be any necessity for selling or mortgaging estates to pay it. In short, I am bewildered in my conjectures, and extremely apprehensive what is to be my fate, and my poor Emily's. Ah, my dear Mrs. Colemore, I fear the stings of poverty only on her account, yet she wants but little now, and
I must

I must accustom her to curb her inclinations hereafter. Don't you think it very extraordinary, neither my brother nor uncle have deigned to make any enquiries after me; they must have seen the papers, and to be so entirely unconcerned about a relation so near to them, is such a proof of apathy and indifference, as severely wounds me. Oh! that uncle! he, at least, ought to shew me attention, or I had not been what I am; forgive this last expression, which the bitterness of sorrow has wrung from me; I will be patient, and bear my affliction without reproaching others. I have impatiently expected to hear from you these three days past; I hope your letters have not miscarried, yet this is such a retired and remote place, I have a thousand fears about them.—I was interrupted by the entrance of Ann. I should be glad, madam, if you could get another maid to attend Miss Emily, as I design going back to London next Monday.

You surprise me, Ann, "what is the meaning you leave me so abruptly?"

"Because I don't like this dismal place, and I hear my master is going out of England, and then I suppose I shall never be paid my agreement."

"I shall take care to pay your wages whilst you remain with me, but, however, I don't press you to stay."

"Yes, madam, but I never should have come so far from home, but master promised me twenty pounds a year above my wages, to be with you, and let him know how things went on."

I was astonished at this instance of meanness, but said,

"Have you heard lately from Mr. Menville, then?"

"No,

"No, but I had a letter yesterday from our cook, and she says master is going over to live with the French, so where will my twenty pounds be then? and I am sure 'tis like being buried alive to remain here."

"Very well, Ann, you may go when you please."

"On Monday, ma'am, I have bespoke a place in the machine that goes from Penzance."

"That's the next town, is it not?"

"Yes, ma'am, five miles off, Mr. Bailey says, and is gone to take a seat for me this morning."

"Very well, I have no objection." She then withdrew. How mean of Mr. Menville to employ this girl as a spy on my conduct. I am sick of myself and the world; but here comes my sweet child to reprove me, I will take a walk with her to calm my mind. My dear Mrs. Colemore, heaven has sent me a friend, but who, or what he is, I know not, nor how I came to be known. I quitted my pen to take a walk on the terrace, my child in my arms; the evening was fine, I took two or three turns; a decent farmer-like looking man passed and bowed; the next turn I stopt, and looking at the sea, was for a moment lost in thought; the same man again approached the walls, and quickly throwing over a piece of paper, which fell heavy, was out of sight in a moment. Very much surprised, I took up the parcel, a large pebble was under the cover, and a letter directed to Mrs. Menville in a hand I never saw; I sat down, my child on my lap, and hastily tore it open; these were the contents.

Madam,

Madam,

Be not alarmed, a friend to virtue and to you, its charming representative, wishes to have the power of serving you. He is no stranger to your unmerited ill-treatment, and the confinement you suffer. His abilities are equal to his wishes, and you may, if you please, soon be released from this place, and placed in the bosom of your friends at Sudbury, join Mrs. Bertie at Spa, or settle wherever you like. The person who writes, is wholly disinterested, but in his desire of making you happy in your own way. He will be near this wall both mornings and evenings, until he is fortunate enough to receive your commands.

A Friend.

This note, my dear friend, has alarmed me; who is there that can have interest enough in my affairs, to hold forth assistance, or can have obtained a knowledge of my situation. My uncle or brother would have interfered openly; Mr. Colemore, I am sure, would not be secret to me; who then *can it be?* but no matter, I never will accept the favours of any man—probably I shall soon be free to act as I please. However, I have written the following answer.

Mrs. Menville feels herself very particularly obliged to the stranger, who so kindly wishes to serve her, but begs to assure him, she is happily in no need of assistance. Her residence in this castle will in all probability be very short, but should it be otherwise, she has nothing to complain of, and consequently has no services to require from a disinterested friend.

This note I shall watch an opportunity to throw over the wall, after which I must discontinue my walks on the terrace; for although I am not
sorry

sorry to find I have a friend near me, yet for worlds I would not be seen to hold converse with any man, nor can I reconcile to myself holding any clandestine correspondence. My situation is so peculiarly delicate, that the slightest breath of slander might irreparably injure me; it behoves me therefore to be extremely cautious. I shall hourly now expect to hear from Mr. Menville, whose displeasure I must expect, and of course must arm myself to bear reproaches, and perhaps suffer great indignities; but I will acquire fortitude to bear every evil I am not conscious of deserving. Write, pray write, my dear Mrs. Colemore, wherever I am, whatever is my destiny, you shall be informed of it, for I am ever

Your affectionate and obliged,

EMILY MENVILLE.

Emily, my name is
Woman!
Shakespeare

END OF VOL. I.

